THE FAVOURITE

Written by

Deborah Davis & Tony McNamara

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Element Pictures
21 Mespil Road
Dublin 4
Ireland

1 EXT COUNTRYSIDE 1

A carriage crosses the landscape.

2 INT CARRIAGE DAY 2

A man in a military uniform with one arm. Inside the carriage,(think overloaded modern taxi) seven or eight people are crammed in. ABIGAIL, an open, friendly innocent woman is crushed to the side. She clutches a dirty purse and a letter in her hands. Two kids, snot streaming from their noses, cough TB into the air. The military man smiles at her. She smiles back empathetically, then notices his other arm jiggling. She looks down. He has his hand inside his pants and is jerking off.

ABIGAIL
Must you?

3 INT PALACE COURTYARD / SF GATE DAY 3

A shout and the carriage stops. Abigail gets up. Stands and yanks the door open, a man grabs her arse. She pulls away but trips and launches off the edge of the carriage falling face first into the mud.

She grabs her bag. Looks up at the castle before her. To her right soldiers are standing around a fire warming themselves, a few amputees.

4 EXT KITCHEN DAY 4

The servant's entrance to the busy kitchen of the castle. At the door, SALLY, a young maid, stares at Abigail and takes the letter she hands her. She closes the door. Abigail waits.

5 EXT KITCHEN DAY 5

Now MEG, the dour, fat 60ish housekeeper opens the door and stares at her. She motions her to come in.

6 INT KITCHEN DAY 6

Abigail steps through into the busy basement kitchen.

MRS MEG
Grab a hunk of bread. Sally will take you to clean up and then to her Ladyship.

Abigail grabs the bread and follows Sally. She tears at the bread ravenously.

7 INT BACKSTAIRS / WWS DAY 7

They head up the stairs. And through a door.

8 INT HALLWAY / A&E DAY 8

They walk along the hallway, wooden, lined with rugs. Beautiful, ornate and opulent.

Abigail stares at her surroundings. She sniffs herself, aware of her stench.

ABIGAIL
This mud stinks.

SALLY
They shit in the street round here. Political commentary they call it.

Sally opens a door.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Go through here. Clean yourself up.

ABIGAIL
Thank you so much.

Abigail goes through. Sally shuts the door behind her with a smile.

Abigail in darkness, finds herself behind a thick curtain. She fumbles her way and pushes through it to find...

9 INT DRAWING ROOM DAY 9

GODOLPHIN, MARLBOROUGH and SARAH staring at her.

SARAH
I didn't know the new sewer ended in here.

Godolphin and Marlborough laugh.

ABIGAIL
Lady Marlborough.

She curtseys.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
It is I Abigail. Dear cousin. I had a letter from our aunt and... I'm sorry, I did not to mean to present as a ... I fell out of the carriage,.. and a man was pulling his... never mind the man. My letter from our aunt...

She holds out the mud soaked letter but stops, flustered, as two flies arrive to buzz around her.

SARAH
Friends of yours?

ABIGAIL
I am sorry... I.

She shoos at them.

SARAH
Your name girl. If we are blood, name it.

ABIGAIL
Oh. I did not... Abigail Hill.

SARAH
The Somerset Hills?

GODOLPHIN
The one who went mad and burnt his own house down, himself in it.

MARLBOROUGH
Lost all his money at whist.

GODOLPHIN
No one bets on whist.

SARAH
My uncle was one of a kind.

ABIGAIL
I apologise for my appearance I do. The staff led me here. A harmless prank of some sort I suspect.

SARAH
And you want?

ABIGAIL
I hoped I might be employed here by you... as something.

SARAH
A monster for the children to play with perhaps?

ABIGAIL
Yes. If you like.

She raises her hands and makes a 'Gggrrr' sound. They smile at this. Sarah considers her.

SARAH
Go back to that gouty old slattern Mrs Meg and tell her I said to give you quarters, food and something to do. Take your flies with you.

Abigail, thrilled, curtsies, turns and fights her way back through the curtain. They are all amused.

9A INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 9A

Queen Anne stands, crown on her head, regal cape on. From behind her hands reach up and remove her crown. Another maid undoes her cape and takes it. Sarah watches on. They leave. Anne limps to a chair.

ANNE
How was my speech?

SARAH
You were brilliant.

ANNE
Did I have a lisp?

SARAH
You don't lisp.

ANNE
I know that's what was troubling about it. The thought I suddenly did.
Sarah, you must say hello to the little ones.

SARAH
No.

ANNE
Please?

Sarah looks over at the fenced off hay-filled pen that contains seventeen white rabbits.

SARAH
It is macabre. I love you but that I will not do.

ANNE
If you love me...

SARAH
Love has limits.

ANNE
It should not.

10 INT SECRET PASSAGE DAY 10

ANNE waits. Breathing a little bit fast. Sarah steps in.

Through the darkness Queen Anne and Sarah walk. Anne puts a blindfold on Sarah, she starts to bump into walls. Anne laughs and rights her.

They get to a door. Anne uses the key which is around Sarah's waist. Finds the lock, slides the key in, turns the lock, the door opens.

11 INT SARAH'S APARTMENTS DAY 11

Sarah stands in front of a model of Blenheim Palace. Anne watches on excitedly as she removes the blindfold. A model sits there. Sarah considers the model and walks round it.

SARAH
You do not lisp but you are mad. Giving me a palace?!

ANNE
I've been wanting to get you something for a while. It seemed a good opportunity. Marlborough winning. Were the Tories alright about it? I couldn't tell.

They stare at each other through the apertures of the model. A moment between them. Sarah shakes her head.

SARAH
It is a monstrous extravagance Mrs Morley. We are at war.

ANNE
We won.

SARAH
It is not over. We must continue.

ANNE
Oh... I did not... know that. Well Mrs Freeman, you will... be clever as keeper of the privy purse... and afford it.

12 INT GREAT HALL EVENING 12

The men and women of the court (COURTIERS) and some of the politicians (WHIGS & TORIES) mill about having drinks. A man carves bloody slices off a roasting elk (CARVING MAN), its head still intact. Marlborough addresses the group.

MARLBOROUGH
Gentleman! Ducks!

We see a makeshift ring has been fashioned out of chairs and upturned tables. Godolphin holds a duck, he lets it go at the same time a tory next to him does the same. Money is thrust to a CENTRAL BOOKIE (TORY) who holds bets. The ducks race to cheers.

Sarah enters, grabs a glass of wine off a FOOTMAN (3) who is holding a tray of them. Her husband looks over at her. She nods hello.

HARLEY walks up beside Sarah.

HARLEY
A palace!

SARAH
You seem angry at my good fortune. And I thought we were friends.

HARLEY
I really doubt you've made that mistake.

SARAH
Well I was actually just teasing. I thought you'd see that.

HARLEY
It will not stand.

SARAH
Well it will if I build it using the best craftsmen in the land. I hope it will stand for a hundred years as a symbol of my husband's gallant victory.

HARLEY
And I applaud your husband's gallant victory. However considering the parlous state of the treasury, it seems something the Queen should have taken advice from the loyal opposition on.

SARAH
But then it would've lost that delightful surprise element. You know like Christmas morning? If St. Nicholas bills you first it loses its frisson.

He stares at her. Building to something.

HARLEY
Cunt!

SARAH
And there I was expecting something witty that rhymed.

An 'Aaah' goes out from the crowd. Godolphin and Marlborough approach. Godolphin leading a duck.

GODOLPHIN
Horatio has done it again.

Sarah warmly squeezes Marlborough's hand as he settles beside her.

HARLEY
Prime Minister we need to discuss who will go to the French with the peace treaty proposal.

SARAH
We do not need a peace treaty. We have them on the run.

HARLEY
So they will give in to us.

GODOLPHIN
One battle will not win the war.

HARLEY
I have held my party together, as we the country landowners have essentially paid for this entire war.

GODOLPHIN
And grateful we are.

HARLEY
While city merchants have enriched themselves from it.

MARLBOROUGH
Yet I do not see your fat tweedy dead when I look out on the field of battle.

HARLEY
We are out of money. My point.

GODOLPHIN
We will raise taxes again.

HARLEY
You would be wise to rethink that Godolphin. I helped unite parliament for this. I will not do it again.

SARAH
The French are chastened but not defeated Harley. We must destroy them. Make them sue for peace, with broken backs and begging hearts.

HARLEY
What a sweet wife you have Marlborough.

MARLBOROUGH
Sweet. And right.

HARLEY
I cannot agree. We must take it to the Queen. If you would be kind enough to arrange a time Lady Marlborough.

She nods.

SARAH
Of course.

13 INT SERVANTS' QUARTERS NIGHT 13

An empty room of stone. A dozen Female Servants are crammed in. Dressed in sleeping wear, they smoke, drink, some try and sleep.

Abigail enters and looks around for somewhere to sleep, stepping over people's feet. A servant (GIRL WITH GLASS) pushes her and she falls, knocking the drink out of Sally's hand. Abigail crawls apologetically to some space in the corner.

Abigail curls up on the floor. Closes her eyes. A splash of liquid hits her face. The others laugh. She doesn't even bother to open her eyes to see what it is.

14 INT. SERVANTS' QUARTERS DAY 14

A row of naked servants including Abigail, all various ages and shapes. Sally soaps up armpits and crotch, then passes the soap to the next. Abigail, takes the soap, finding it utterly distasteful. An old woman with a large bucket throws water at them. Very cold water. Abigail grimaces.

15 INT GOLDEN HALLWAY DAY 15

A hallway. A FOOTMAN (2) outside a door. Sarah waits. Anne enters from her rooms, dramatic dark make up around her eyes.

ANNE
I am ready for the Russian ambassador.

SARAH
Who did your make up?

ANNE
We went for something dramatic. Do you like it?

SARAH
You look like a badger.

ANNE
Oh.

Her eyes start to tear.

SARAH
You're going to cry? Really?

She stops her. They look in a mirror.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What do you think you look like?

ANNE
(sadly)
A badger.

Sarah smiles ruefully.

SARAH
And do you really think you can meet the Russian delegation looking like that?

She shakes her head.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I will manage it. Go back to your rooms.

She nods sadly.

ANNE
Thank you.

Sarah walks off. Anne walks back toward the Footman (3). He looks straight ahead.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Did you just look at me! Did you?!

He shakes his head no. Looks at the ground.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Do not avert your eyes! Shut them!

He shuts them. She goes back into her rooms.

16 INT KITCHEN DAY 16

The busy, bustling kitchen. Maids scurry. Cooks cook.

In a corner piles of Dishes and dirty caked on plates in front of her. Steaming hot water in troughs. Abigail works on the dishes. Sally comes in carrying a bucket and brush.

SALLY
Morning.

ABIGAIL
(bright and friendly)
Oh hello. I was thinking of playing cards later if you would like to join me.

SALLY
Sounds brill. The old bag says you are to scrub the floor until she can see her toothless fat face in it.

She hands her the bucket full of liquid.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Sorry.

Abigail shrugs. Gets down on her hands and knees. She plunges her hand in the bucket. Intense pain shoots through her hand. She pulls it out.

SALLY (CONT'D)
You might need gloves. Lye is dangerous. It burns bad.

Abigail writhes in pain. The girls laugh and saunter off as she sticks her burning hand into a sink of cold water.

17 INT KITCHEN NIGHT 17

The kitchen is quiet. A few servants work but it's late. Abigail works her way through the dishes in the near empty kitchen, the red raw pain in her hand excruciating. Mrs Meg rushes in. Sees Abigail.

MRS MEG
(to Abigail)
You! Get the bandage box!

Abigail looks at her.

MRS MEG (CONT'D)
Hurry! The Queen's had an attack of gout.

Mrs Meg grabs a bucket covered with a white cloth. *

Abigail retrieves the bandage box.

18 INT BACKSTAIRS / WWS NIGHT 18

Abigail follows Mrs Meg along a narrow corridor. Abigail juggles the bandage box and bucket. *

19 INT GOLDEN HALLWAY NIGHT 19

They pass Footman (1). The doors open.

20 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS NIGHT 20

Abigail looks around as she enters the Queen's rooms for the first time.

Piercing sobs draw Abigail's attention. They enter the semi-darkened bedroom.

21 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS NIGHT 21

Anne is lying on the floor, her leg raised up on a chair.

Sarah is there, examining Anne's foot. Anne screams. Footman 1 brings a bottle of brandy past hurriedly. The QUEEN'S MAID stands by as the QUEEN'S DOCTOR examines her leg.

Mrs. Meg motions to her, Abigail puts the bucket down.

Sarah glances briefly at Abigail, The Doctor, who is laying a leech on Anne's leg. She flinches.

ANNE
Sarah!

SARAH
I'm here. I'm here.
Brandy!

She pushes a shot of brandy to Anne's trembling lips. Abigail watches on.

ANNE
They hurt.

SARAH
I know my dearest I know. The beef! *

Mrs Meg uncovers the bucket to reveal thin slices of raw beef. Abigail starts laying the slices on her leg. Anne screams. * *

SARAH (CONT'D)
Gently cousin. *

Abigail nods. The Queen focuses on Abigail for a second, then a new wave of pain comes on her. Anne closes her eyes grimacing. *

SARAH (CONT'D)
(to Anne)
It's alright. Tell me a story.
(to Mrs Meg and the Doctor)
You two may go.
(to Abigail)
You, start wrapping that. *

Mrs Meg and the Doctor nod and exit. Abigail wraps the leg in bandages. Anne, Sarah and Abigail are left there. But to Sarah it's just her and Anne. * *

ANNE
I... can't. I...

SARAH
How we first met. Tell me that.
Come on.

Anne struggles to focus, but tries.

ANNE
The... wretched... Cheever boy had me down on the ground and was holding me... dropping spittle in my face.

SARAH
He is still a pig. Then what?

Blood leaks through some pores. She mops it up.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Then what?

ANNE
I heard footsteps, fast footsteps, and saw these pink shoes running towards me...

Anne gulps brandy down. She is calming.

ANNE (CONT'D)
.. and then they disappeared and I heard a crack. And then he fell off me, and I looked over and... ughh.

SARAH
Remember how his jaw just hung there?

ANNE
I do. You took my hand and said 'Hello, I'm Sarah. You're covered in spittle. Let's wash you off'.

They laugh. Abigail is awkward at being present to this private moment.

SARAH
You must try to sleep.

Anne nods. She clasps Sarah's hand.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(to Abigail)
You may go.

She goes.

ANNE
Don't leave.

SARAH
I won't.

Anne closes her eyes.

ANNE
Are you still there?

SARAH
Yes.

Beat.

ANNE
Still?

SARAH
Yes.

Sarah touches Anne's face, tenderly.

22 INT SERVANTS' QUARTERS NIGHT 22

It's dark and cramped. Abigail is lying huddled in the corner. She raises her hand and unwraps the bandage to see it, blistered and sore.

She looks around at the sleeping, farting, snoring bodies. She can't bear it.

23 EXT STABLES DAWN 23

Pre dawn. Abigail passes a sleeping groom by the stable door.

24 EXT PARK MORNING 24

A forested area. Abigail, one hand on the reins, races through the dawn light.

She comes to a halt, breathless and happy for a moment. She dismounts the horse and scans the forest floor for a particular plant. Upon finding it, she breaks off some leaves. She crushes the leaves with a stone on another stone and then unbandages her hand, places the pulp against her blisters and redresses her hand. She reaches down and bundles together some more leaves before getting back on her horse.

Through the trees, she spies a handsome Equerry in his twenties, MASHAM. His eyes are closed and his head rests on his horse's neck. He looks peaceful. Abigail watches him, transfixed. Suddenly his eyes blink open and he looks straight at her.

She kicks her horse and shoots away.

25 INT BACKSTAIRS / WWS / A&E DAY 25

Abigail walks up the stairs.

26 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 26

Abigail walks into the apartment. She sees the Footman 1 from the night before guarding the door.

ABIGAIL
For the Queen. The doctor has ordered it immediately. It is a matter of extreme urgency

FOOTMAN 1
She's sleeping.

ABIGAIL
Shall I tell the doctor you imperiled the Queens health and let you rue the ramifications.

FOOTMAN 1
What does ramifi...mean.

ABIGAIL
It means he will have you whipped.

He nods, waves a hand to let her through. She goes into the Queen's bedroom.

27 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 27

Anne lies sleeping, snoring slightly. Abigail examines her legs. They are still inflamed. She removes the dressing, pulls out the leaves she found on her ride and places them gently on her legs. Anne stirs a little.

Sarah enters. Stares at her.

SARAH
What are you doing?

ABIGAIL
I am... I... these are peleatis, the herb. I cut them this morning. They remove swelling and inflammation. I saw them and I thought it may help the Queen.

SARAH
You cannot just walk in here! Why did the footman let you through?

ABIGAIL
I lied to him. It is not his fault. I just wanted to help her. She seemed to suffer so much.

Sarah sees a group of three military men, Godolphin and Marlborough enter at the far door. She nods to them.

SARAH
Footman take her downstairs. Tell Mrs. Meg she is to receive six of the birch. Go!

Abigail is stunned. She nods and walks with the footman 1 out past the entering men.

Sarah goes to the woozy Anne.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You must focus Anne. Much is at stake.

28 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 28

The maps are laid out across Anne's legs, she struggles to focus. Marlborough has a pointer. He hits the map.

MARLBOROUGH
We gather forces here. The Austrians mass here.

Anne focuses on the map.

ANNE
Is that... which country again?

SARAH
Listen!

She hits the map with the pointer.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Marlborough.

MARLBOROUGH
This is the town of Lille, in a valley. We lure them in by sending a small force to engage them. They give chase. We descend in numbers from above them.

GODOLPHIN
Hear hear.

Others concur.

SARAH
It is a brilliant plan. Queen Anne, you agree?

ANNE
The people expect it to be over.

Sarah takes her hand.

SARAH
We all want it over, but wishing does not make it so Anne. We could sue for peace, but we will not get it.

ANNE
It does help.

They turn. Anne stirs. She sits up woozy, as if slightly drugged.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Something soothing on my legs, it takes the burn out. What is it?

SARAH
Oh. Herbs. Of some sort.

ANNE
It's nice. Thank you.

She closes her eyes. Falls asleep. They stare at her.

29 INT KITCHEN DAY 29

The Footman 1 drags a struggling Abigail in, holding her by her ear. The whole kitchen stops. Servants turn and watch.

ABIGAIL
No! Please!

He takes her to a side bench by the wall. Pushes her over it.

MRS MEG
Do her in the barn if that is what is, not in my kitchen.

FOOTMAN ONE
Her Ladyship says six of the birch for this one.

Mrs Meg shrugs and nods.

He pulls down the back of Abigail's dress to reveal her bare back.

Mrs Meg goes to the corner and gets a hard stick of birch. The other girls stand around eating biscuits, excited for the show.

Abigail focuses on a smiling Sally.

Mrs Meg lifts her arm and lashes the birch across her back. Abigail flinches.

SALLY
She really is a lady, look how soft that skin is.

Mrs Meg pulls her arm back, strikes her again.

SARAH OS
Stop!

Sarah enters.

SARAH OS (CONT'D)
Let her up.

Abigail stands.

A welt starts forming across her back.

SARAH
Follow me.

30 INT KITCHEN HALLWAY DAY 30

Sarah and Abigail in a small hallway off the kitchen.

SARAH
So you are perhaps too kind for your own good.

ABIGAIL
It has been said.

SARAH
Which leads to stupidity. But the Queen is soothed somewhat so I thank you. You shall get me more of those herbs. And not overstep again.

ABIGAIL
Yes Maam. My father always spoke highly of you.

SARAH
I liked your father, he had charm to burn.
And then I guess he did.

Abigail nods.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You have fallen far.

ABIGAIL
Yes. When I was fifteen my father lost me in a card game.

SARAH
You are not serious?

Abigail
Oh he was very upset about it. Took off into the forest with nothing but a scullery maid and a dozen bottles for solace.

SARAH
And you went?

ABIGAIL
We honour our debts. They would have hurt him.

SARAH
Foolish. A woman should not let herself be chattel.

ABIGAIL
I wanted to do right by my father. The debt was to a balloon shaped German man with a thin cock. Thankfully I managed to convince him a woman has her blood in twenty eight days a month.

Sarah considers her, notices her bandage hand.

SARAH
What happened to your hand?

ABIGAIL
Some of my colleagues are immune to my charms.

31 INT. ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM DAY 31

Mrs Meg opens a door. Abigail enters a cell like room containing a single bed, a small table and a wash basin.

Abigail puts her battered bag on the floor. She can't believe it. She is thrilled and bounces on the bed. Her own room.

Mrs Meg leaves with a leer. Abigail goes and shuts the door and notices there is no lock.

32 INT HALLWAY / CG DAY 32

Abigail, now dressed in a new dress, walks along the halls with Sarah. Sarah carries a document with the royal seal on it. A chubby aristocrat, EARL STRATFORD, sees Sarah and heads toward her.

SARAH
Earl Stratford, do not come near me whining today or I will crush your tiny heart to liver.

He backs off.

A French woman elegantly dressed, MADAME TOURNEE.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Madame Tournee. You may have the tapestry budget you have asked for. Spend one penny more and I will take your finger nails in lieu.

MADAME TOURNEE
Merci.

SARAH
Abigail, get a platter of oysters sent to the Dutch Ambassador.

ABIGAIL
Yes your Ladyship.

Masham steps into view.

SARAH
Colonel Masham.

He looks past Sarah and locks eyes with Abigail.

MASHAM
Lady Marlborough.

SARAH
The Queen will ride on Tuesday morning.

MASHAM
Yes, Lady Marlborough.

He loiters.

SARAH
Would you like a bite of my new maid before you leave?

He bows, a small smile exchanged between he and Abigail, and departs. Sarah sees the smile between them.

33 INT DRAWING ROOM DAY 33

Godolphin and Harley sit on couches smoking. Horatio sits next to Godolphin.

HARLEY
Must the duck be here?

GODOLPHIN
Fastest duck in the city. Horatio is a prize worth stealing, he does not leave my side.

HARLEY
Keep him away from me or I will pull his liver out and eat it with a cornichon.

GODOLPHIN
Charming.

HARLEY
You should know, I have canvassed my party. They are waiting for us to announce an attempt at peace.

GODOLPHIN
We shall both make our case to the Queen.

Harley stabs his pipe out, infuriated.

HARLEY
Where is the Queen? We have been waiting an hour.

Sarah enters with Abigail.

SARAH
I'm here.

HARLEY
Might I remind you, you are not the Queen.

SARAH
She has sent me to speak for her. She is unwell.

Abigail goes to a side table set with cakes. She starts cutting a piece.

GODOLPHIN
What says she?

SARAH
That Harley is a fop and a prat and smells like a ninety six year old French whore's vajuju.

HARLEY
I really doubt you're quoting.

SARAH
She has decided to continue with the war. She feels another victory in will put us in a stronger position for a treaty. Her letters.

She places a folded document with the royal seal on the table.

HARLEY
And how are we to pay for this?

Abigail delivers the cake.

SARAH
The Land tax is to be doubled.

HARLEY
This is madness. The war you will be fighting will be in our own countryside. *

SARAH
She relies on you and your love of England to hold the Tories together.

HARLEY
There are limits.

SARAH
To love of your country? To me there is no limit on that. Our last farthing to protect England if we must.

HARLEY
And our last man too? The dead pile up as do the resentments. Or that does not concern you?

SARAH
I grieve them all, in my heart a scar for each, and I send my own beloved with them, chest bared. So do not lecture me on the cost. You * do not count the cost in men until you need something heavy to toss on the scales with your greed.

HARLEY
A treaty would save money and lives. A win for all Englishman.

GODOLPHIN
We go to them after one victory, they know we are scared. We bury more of them. They know we have them. The Queen has decided Harley.

HARLEY
I disagree...a lot! I would like an audience with her where I may state my case.

SARAH
State it to me, I love a comedy. Is there cake?

Harley stares at her, disbelievingly.

HARLEY
This is a disgusting distortion of the system. You have no place in this!

SARAH
Your mascara is running. If you'd like to go fix yourself we can continue this later.

Harley kicks a small table across the room. He is exasperated, spittle flying. Abigail is thrilled by the whole thing.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You will need to pay for the repair of that. We have a war to finance. Every penny counts.

GODOLPHIN
(to Harley)
Come on, old bean. One more victory. Otherwise they will use the time it takes for a treaty negotiation to regroup. Mark my words. *

Harley ignores him, just staring angrily at Sarah. Suddenly Harley runs at Sarah, stopping just in front of her. She doesn't flinch. His breath is ragged, she breathes calmly. He breaks and storms from the room.

GODOLPHIN (CONT'D)
Must you rub it in? A man's dignity is the thing that holds him back from running amok.

SARAH
Sometimes a lady likes to have fun.

Godolphin eyes Sarah.

GODOLPHIN
We need to be careful Sarah. He is a useful ally and a dangerous enemy.

Godolphin exits. A wide eyed Abigail.

ABIGAIL
You are... extraordinary. A woman like no other.

SARAH
And you are astute and perspicacious. And perhaps something of a flatterer.

ABIGAIL
It is not flattery when it is fact.
You are not scared of anyone.

SARAH
Of course not.

34 INT GOLDEN HALLWAY DAY 34

Abigail walks the hallway. Sees Masham. She follows him for a bit.

He turns around suddenly and looks at her.

MASHAM
Are you following me?

Abigail turns on her heel and walks back the way she came.

He follows.

MASHAM (CONT'D)
I said are you following me?

ABIGAIL
You seem to be following me, sir,
as I am in front of you.

MASHAM
That was you on the horse this
morning.

ABIGAIL
I am a servant, where would I get a
horse? Perhaps you dreamt of me?

MASHAM
Perhaps it was you and I should
have you stripped and whipped.

ABIGAIL
I'm waiting.

She stares at him challengingly. He smiles, but doesn't move.

She suddenly breaks off and heads into the backstairs.

Harley walks in from another room. Sees Masham.

HARLEY
Going to ride that one are we?

MASHAM
She does make my blood hot.
She is Lady Marlborough's new one.

HARLEY
Indeed. Interesting.

35 OMITTED 35

36 INT SARAH'S QUARTERS DAY 36

Sarah walks and finds Abigail looking at her books.

SARAH
Borrow anything you want.

ABIGAIL
Thank you. And thank you for the job.

SARAH
I have a thing for the weak.

Marlborough comes to the door. Sarah turns and looks at him.

MARLBOROUGH
It is time.

She nods. Then rushes to Marlborough and embraces him, holding him tightly.

SARAH
You must be safe. You must not be foolish and brave. Be smart and safe. I beg you.

MARLBOROUGH
I will.

SARAH
Stay with me tonight.

MARLBOROUGH
I must sleep with my men.
It is only right.

She nods. He kisses her softly on the lips.

37 INT PALACE COURTYARD / GREAT HALL AFTERNOON 37

Anne and Sarah stand at the window looking down on A line of HIGH RANKING military men on black horses. Marlborough raises a hand of farewell to them. Abigail stands by the door.

SARAH
I had a dream that this very small Frenchman covered in blood, was carrying his head around feeding it brie. * *

Anne pinches her hand. They look at each other.

ANNE
He is a great soldier.

Sarah composes herself.

SARAH
He will be fine. We will prevail.

ANNE
Of course we will Mrs Freeman.

Anne walks away toward the door.

Abigail coughs loudly as she reaches her. Attracting a look from Anne.

ABIGAIL
I am sorry Your Majesty. I think I caught a chill picking the herbs for your leg.

ANNE
That was you?

ABIGAIL
Abigail.

Anne nods. Heads past her and out.

Sarah watches the horses disappear. Turns around. Sees Abigail.

SARAH
Let's shoot something.

38 EXT PALACE GROUNDS / EG AFTERNOON 38

A large cage full of cooing pigeons. Inside it a PIGEON BOY waits for his cue.

SARAH O/S
Throw!

He releases a pigeon and it flies through the air. A gunshot and it drops to the ground.

Sarah smiles, satisfied. At her feet, a pile of dead birds. The dogs retrieve the latest. She looks across at Abigail who has a gun.

ABIGAIL
It's sad really. They are so pretty.

SARAH
Learn to fly faster, pretty will not save you bird.

ABIGAIL
Throw!

A bird is released, Abigail raises her weapon and misses it.

SARAH
You're really doing damage to the sky.

ABIGAIL
Can I ask you something?

SARAH
As long as you are aware I have a gun.

ABIGAIL
You fought hard for this war and your husband is at the front of it, his life at risk. How can you ... do that?

SARAH
It is right. If we don't do it they will gather force and be over here cutting us all into chops within the year. You are of a sweet disposition and have had some blows so desire safety and favour above all else.

ABIGAIL
If he dies?

SARAH
Did you not sacrifice your cunt to fatty German to save your father?

ABIGAIL
...Yes.

SARAH
There's always a price to pay. I am prepared to pay it. Throw!

The bird flies, she shoots it down. Stares across at Abigail.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Just relax and aim. When it crosses your eye, pull the trigger.

ABIGAIL
Throw!

Abigail lines up the shot, shoots and brings it down. She smiles weakly, pleased yet sad.

SARAH
Yes! Perfect! I will make a killer of you yet.

39 INT GREAT HALL EVENING 39

A pair of bandaged legs in gold sequined stockings. Anne is wheeled into the ballroom by a Footman (4) on a brocaded throne chair with wheels. The ballroom is thronged with people.

People bow as she enters. She greets them.

The wheels are chocked with little wooden chocks. Harley makes a beeline for her.

HARLEY
Your Majesty. How lovely to see you. It seems you have allocated even more money into the abyss that is this fool's errand.

ANNE
Oh. Yes. We... will win. Sarah is sure we will win.

HARLEY
This landholders tax. You have no idea the fire storm of rage you have set loose in the countryside.

ANNE
Really? They are angry?

Sarah arrives.

SARAH
Dearest Queen.

Anne smiles at Sarah.

ANNE
How do you like the stockings?

SARAH
Festive.

HARLEY
I was just explaining to the Queen the mistake this tax is, and the war as well. We should sue for peace.

SARAH
Oh Harley, you're such a bore. That is for parliament. A ball is for dancing and eating these venison and horseradish puffs. Have you tried these?

HARLEY
I am having trouble swallowing at the moment. Your Majesty-

ANNE
I would like to enjoy the music now.

HARLEY
Of course.

Sarah winks at Harley. He walks away. The orchestra strikes up.

SARAH
Oh I love this music. I must dance.

Sarah leaves Anne and walks to the centre of the room. She stands scanning the crowd who naturally stop talking and give her attention. She raises her hand and slowly moves it over the crowd, finally stopping on Masham.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You.

A small smattering of applause as he heads to her.

The music begins. The dancing begins. A fast paced waltz. A little bit idiosyncratic, legs fly. Anne is thrilled, watching their slick leg work and fast moves. Then she saddens at the sight of her useless balloon like legs laid out in front of her, a little new blood seeping through her sequined stockings.

ANNE
Stop it.
Stop!

The music stops suddenly. Sarah looks at Anne.

ANNE (CONT'D)
I would like to go back to my room now!

SARAH
What has happened?

ANNE
Now!

The Footman (3) starts to wheel her away. People are staring, Anne sees Harley.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Stop!
Mr Harley, I agree I went too far with the tax for the war.

SARAH
What?!

ANNE
We shall keep it as it was.

Sarah's eyes blaze. Harley smiles and bows. Sarah takes over pushing from the footman.

HARLEY
We are your servants my Queen.

40 INT GOLDEN HALLWAY NIGHT 40

Sarah wheels Anne along.

When they are alone, Sarah spins the wheelchair around.

SARAH
Anne, I'm sorry.

Anne slaps her hard across the face.

SARAH (CONT'D)
It's okay.

Anne nods. They smile at each other.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Shall we go fast?

She runs with the chair, Anne shrieks and squeals.

41 INT SARAH'S QUARTERS NIGHT 41

Abigail climbs the ladder to the bookshelf. She slides a book in and pulls a new one out.

Hears the door open. Sees Anne's wheelchair whiz in and crash into the wall. Sarah follows behind. Abigail freezes.

ANNE
Give me your finger.

Sarah does so. Anne puts it in her mouth. Sucks it for a second then bites it hard. Abigail's eyes widen.

She watches as Anne releases her bite, grabs Sarah, pulls her face to hers, kissing her hard and passionately on the mouth.

Abigail almost falls off the ladder, but stays up. Hangs on.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Fuck me.

Sarah nods. She wheels her through to the bedroom.

Across the way, Abigail stands rigid on the ladder. She breathes out. Drops to the floor. Starts to creep out as quietly as possible.

42 INT HALLWAY / A&E NIGHT 42

Abigail clutching a book, in a daze starts to walk down the stairway.

Harley suddenly stands before her.

HARLEY
Abigail isn't it?

ABIGAIL
Yes sir,...

HARLEY
Stole a book I see. Why, one could be stripped and whipped for that.

ABIGAIL
My mistress lent it to me.

HARLEY
Shall we go ask her?

ABIGAIL
No!

Harley is satisfied he has something over her.

HARLEY
Come and take the night air with me.

She is a little scared but follows him.

43 EXT PALACE LAWNS / EG NIGHT 43

Harley walks with Abigail across the lawn. The lights of the castle behind them.

HARLEY
So you once were a lady and now you are a nothing, a bit of scullery scraps. How very sad.

ABIGAIL
I am still the lady I was. In my heart.

HARLEY
No doubt. It is important to make new friends is it not?

ABIGAIL
Yes. If that is what is actually happening here, and not veiled threats under the guise of civility.

Harley laughs.

HARLEY
Am I to understand you are smart?

ABIGAIL
You want something. To fuck me?

HARLEY
I will leave that to my friend Masham, who is completely cuntstruck by you. So tell me about Lady Marlborough, Godolphin, the Queen. Anything going on? I love gossip. It's a failing I know.

ABIGAIL
Lady Marlborough has been good to me, she has saved me. I will not breach her confidence.

HARLEY
Of course. You are in favour. But favour is a breeze that shifts direction all the time. Then in an instant you're back sleeping with a bunch of scabrous whores wondering whose finger's in your arse. You cannot have too many friends in court. I need a friend Abigail, one with cute ears and wide eyes. I am often blind-sided by the distorted situation at court. As Leader of the Opposition I should not be.
(MORE)

HARLEY (CONT'D)
I would merely like to know of any plans her Ladyship, Godolphin or the Queen may have.

ABIGAIL
I will not betray my mistress's trust.

HARLEY
Oh look a wren. How cute.

She looks to the trees. Harley trips her and she goes face first into the stony path.

HARLEY (CONT'D)
Are you alright? Let me help you up.

He reaches down. She warily reaches out a hand and he pulls her up a little.

HARLEY (CONT'D)
Thing is if you're not my friend. You are..

Then suddenly lets her go, she falls back down.

HARLEY (CONT'D)
... by definition my enemy. Anyway, think on it. No pressure.

Harley stalks off. Abigail sees the little wren, lying dead on the ground beside the path.

44 INT SARAH'S QUARTERS DAY 44

Morning. Abigail pours hot chocolate into two cups on a tray. Anne lying on a sofa. And Sarah on a chair.

SARAH
You will have to tell Harley you have changed your mind about the tax.

ANNE
Can't you do that?

SARAH
I am not the Queen.

ANNE
...are the people really angry about the land tax?

SARAH
They'll be angrier when the French are sodomising their wives and planting their fields with garlic.

ANNE
The Tories must not be rode roughshod over though. And...more dead if we do it.

SARAH
It is painful to lose men, but we cannot be half hearted in this or they will see our weakness and take us and we will lose thousands more. We must be strong Anne. It hangs in the balance and the tipping point is courage.

Abigail approaches with the hot chocolate.

SARAH (CONT'D)
None for the Queen.

ANNE
What?

SARAH
You cannot have hot chocolate. Your stomach, the sugar inflames it.

ANNE
Abigail hand me the cup.

SARAH
Do not.

Abigail is frozen.

ABIGAIL
I'm sorry, I do not know what to....

SARAH
Fine, give it to her, and then go get a bucket and a mop for the aftermath.

Anne takes it, but does not drink it. Sits with it. Abigail exits.

ANNE
Take me back.

She gets in her chair. Sarah goes across and unlocks the door panel to the secret passage.

45 INT SECRET PASSAGE DAY 45

Sarah wheels Anne.

SARAH
You will pronounce the tax in parliament. I will set the date.

Anne nods. They stop. Sarah unlocks the door. Rolls Anne in. Shuts the door and heads back up the passage.

46 EXT PALACE GROUNDS / EG DAY 46

A suit of armour. A shot is fired banging into it, an arm falls to the ground.

At a distance Sarah and Abigail. Sarah reloads her pistol using the gun powder funnel.

ABIGAIL
I must tell you something.

SARAH
Go on.

ABIGAIL
Mr Harley came to me. He asked me to betray your confidences, about what goes on between you and the Queen and Godolphin.

SARAH
I see. And what will you do?

ABIGAIL
I... am not going to! Obviously.

SARAH
Not obviously. You may tell me of his approach to encourage my trust and still work both sides of the street.

ABIGAIL
(outraged)
I am a person of honour even if my station is not. Even if I were to be the last one left in this wretched place, I would remain a lady!

Sarah laughs.

SARAH
You are pretty when outraged. So my secrets are safe with you?

ABIGAIL
All of them.

SARAH
Good.

ABIGAIL
Even your biggest secret.

Sarah looks up at Abigail, who smiles knowingly. She closes her gun.

SARAH
Abigail.

Sarah rises her gun. Shoots.

Abigail falls. Sarah starts laughing.

A terrified Abigail lies on the ground, checking herself for wounds. Sarah's smiling face appears suddenly above her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
If you forget to load the pellet the gun fires, makes the sound, but releases no shot. It is a great jape do you agree?

ABIGAIL
Yes.. great.

SARAH
Maybe we will think of some use for it one day. Sometimes it is hard to remember if you have loaded the pellet or not. I do fear confusion and accidents.

ABIGAIL
I'm sure people will be careful.

47 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 47

Anne drops lettuce leaves into the enclosure for her rabbits. She watches them for a moment. She's bored.

48 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 48

Anne sits alone, a big cake with blue icing half eaten beside her as she plays solitaire. She takes another piece of cake, her lips blue from the icing. She feels ill suddenly. Makes a noise.

Lady in waiting is ready with a bucket, she rushes over with and Anne throws up into it.

Footman (2) enters with a mop. Lady in waiting dabs at her lips with a linen. Anne pushes her away.

49 INT SECRET PASSAGE DAY 49

Anne on a crutch limps along the passageway.

50 INT SARAH'S QUARTERS DAY 50

Anne enters but the apartment is empty.

51 INT PRIVY PURSE OFFICE DAY 51

A full office, crammed with people and activity. Sarah is maintaining order, just. Sarah is at the desk, entering figures in the ledger. Abigail in the background.

MRS MEG
Twelve guineas for beef.

She is rewarded with a nod. Harley watches on, seated to the right of Sarah.

SARAH
Madame Tournee.

Madame Tournee steps forward.

SARAH (CONT'D)
The Winter Ball. Your expenses are out of control!

Madame Tournee
Madame is an artiste and art is like a cloud, it floats and gathers force as it must before it rains joy.

SARAH
Let it rain at the cost of eight guineas instead of fifty.

MADAME TOURNEE
But...

Sarah looks to her ledger, ignoring Madame Tournee.

SARAH
Cream. Mrs Meg your cream bill is outrageous. Are you bathing in it to help your hemorrhoids?

MRS MEG
No your Ladyship.

HARLEY
May I examine?

SARAH
Of course.

Harley looks down the ledger. He nods reluctantly.

HARLEY
Perfect Lady Marlborough. As always.

SARAH
Shall we sign off?

He nods. He signs the ledger. As does she.

PAGE BOY 2, a young boy of fifteen, comes in and whispers to Sarah.

52 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 52

Sarah enters to find Anne standing on a window sill. She leans out dangerously, the wind pulls at her.

SARAH
Aim for the flagstones. The lawn may break your fall.

ANNE
You do not care!

SARAH
Mrs Morley. Please.

Sarah goes to her. Grabs her suddenly by the back of the hair and yanks her inside. She lands on her arse.

ANNE
Ow! Just stay for a little while! No! Take the day off. I command it.

SARAH
Someone must run things!
(plaintively)
I am not food! You cannot just eat and eat!

Anne grabs Sarah by the forearm and bites her.

ANNE
(playfully)
And yet you are tasty.

And licks her.

ANNE (CONT'D)
And salty. And if I grilled you, you would make a delightful meal.

SARAH
You are... incorrigible.

Beat.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Fine. I will come and play Whist with you this afternoon.

Anne smiles and claps her hands. Sarah, resigned, turns and leaves.

53 INT PARLIAMENT AFTERNOON 53

The Tories stomp their feet heavily drowning out Godolphin as he tries to speak.

GODOLPHIN
The opposition asks us to be halfhearted in this war! We will not! We must wear our griefs for England is worth our all, and suffer we must to save her! Mr Harley control your rabble!

Sarah watches on. Sarah scribbles down a note and hands it to pageboy 2.

54 OMITTED 54

54A INT GOLDEN HALLWAY AFTERNOON 54A

Abigail walks through into the Queen's apartment.

She moves past the two Footmen (1-3) into

55 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS AFTERNOON 55

There stands a table, set up, cards at the ready. A bottle of champagne and glasses.

A low growling sound comes from the next room. The Queen stands at a table and is stretching her leg in a ballet move and growling in pain.

Abigail watches the Queen from the salon doorway. Anne senses someone coming.

ANNE
About time Mrs Freeman. This fucking leg! It is like a monster attacking me. Cut it off for me will you?

ABIGAIL
I do not think so your Majesty.

Anne turns and looks at Abigail.

ANNE
Why are you here?

ABIGAIL
Lady Marlborough sent me as I am an excellent Whist player and she has been unavoidably detained with the business of state, but will be here post haste.

ANNE
It's my state! I am the business of state. Did she actually send me her maid?!

ABIGAIL
As I am standing here I am going to assume that's rhetorical. Your Majesty I wasn't always a maid. I am educated, speak French, Latin. My family fell on hard times. I am also her cousin.

ANNE
Very fascinating, but you shall leave regardless and tell her to come.

Abigail turns to leave, sees the rabbit enclosure.

ABIGAIL
Oh! They are gorgeous.

Anne grimaces, watches her go to them.

ANNE
My babies. Let them out please.

Abigail unlatches the door, it swings open and the rabbits hop out into the bedroom.

ABIGAIL
How many are there?

ANNE
Seventeen. It's Hildebrand's day today.

ABIGAIL
Which one is he?

Anne points to the small, white rabbit.

ANNE
That one. Shy, but stubborn.

ABIGAIL
May I?

Anne nods. Abigail picks him up.

ANNE
He likes you. I lost some seventeen children. Some born as blood, some without breath, and some just briefly with me.

Abigail's heart instantly goes out to her, tears pop from her eyes taking Anne by surprise.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Oh my dear.

Then Anne cries.

ABIGAIL
Today is Hildebrand's... day. The day, you lost him.

Anne nods.

ANNE
Each one that dies, something of you goes with them.

Abigail takes her hand.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Would you like to join me?

56 OMITTED 56

57 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS EVENING 57

At the table, a battered and half torn apart birthday cake.

On the floor, the rabbits sit with the Queen and Abigail who feed them handfuls of cake.

58 INT ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM NIGHT 58

Abigail lies on her bed reading one of Sarah's books. She finishes and closes it. Suddenly the door swings open. She's startled. It's Masham.

Masham is wearing his Cavalry uniform: a velvet jacket lined in satin, white ruffles on his shirt, breeches, red stockings and black patent shoes with heels. Make up.

Abigail calmly stays where she is.

ABIGAIL
What an outfit.

MASHAM
Why thank you. I thought it might be too much.

ABIGAIL
Have you come to seduce me or rape me?

MASHAM
I am a gentleman.

ABIGAIL
So rape then.

MASHAM
No. You are a... You have intrigued me.

ABIGAIL
And you, me. I am intrigued by what you look like under this.

Abigail gets up carefully examines his powdered face. She smudges his lipstick.

Abigail whisks the wig off his head. She ruffles his hair. Abigail puts the wig on her own head. She takes a wet cloth and wipes away some of his make up.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
You are handsome. No wonder you cover it up. Women would swoon and nothing would get done.

MASHAM
Who are you? No ordinary maid.

ABIGAIL
It could be said I have fallen far.

Masham pulls her to him suddenly.

MASHAM
It could be said I aim to catch you.

She leans in to kiss him. Bites his lip suddenly. Breaks.

ABIGAIL
I might allow it.

She pushes him in the chest playfully.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Now good night sir.

He takes his wig back. Puts it back on his head awkwardly, making her laugh. Bows and leaves.

She falls back on the bed. Smiles wryly.

59 INT HALLWAY / WWS NIGHT 59

Masham shuts the door behind him. Harley waits in the hallway, smoking.

HARLEY
Progress?

MASHAM
She bit me. And this wig is ridiculous.

HARLEY
A man must look pretty.

MASHAM
I'm not entirely sure she approves.

HARLEY
Try again in your own way old boy.

He nods.

60 INT. ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 60

Anne sits, dressed in a fine linen body suit. Sarah brings in a complex contraption, not dissimilar to a Medieval suit of armour. It has leather straps, buckles, iron plate and a steel brace. Sarah attaches the leather straps first to one shoulder and then the other shoulder, passing the straps under, over, and across Anne's upper body, pushing her to raise first one arm and then the other.

Sarah squeezes Anne's spare flesh to ensure the straps are tightly fitted to her body.

Anne
Ow.

Sarah attaches a Breast Plate and Back Plate to the leather straps. Sarah rocks Anne back and forward as she fits each plate to a web of smaller leather straps and tightens each buckle, as if she were screwing Anne into an iron cage.

Sarah moves down to Anne's bandaged leg.

Sarah eases the leg into a steel brace which she tightens with screws.

The leg brace attaches to a seat that in turn attaches to the iron and steel cage around Anne's torso. Sarah steps back. Nods.

61 EXT PARK DAY 61

Anne and Sarah ride on horseback down a wide avenue in the park. Anne packed into her contraption.

SARAH
Apologies regarding sending Abigail in my stead.

ANNE
She was perfectly darling. Hildebrand really took to her.

SARAH
Is that a rabbit?

Anne looks at her annoyed.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Anne. You are too sensitive.

ANNE
And you are too uncaring and mean some days.

Sarah turns her horse, she is apologetic, tries to joke her way out.

SARAH
Some days I'm quite lovely though. Let's think of them.

Anne kicks her horse on, riding away from her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Anne!

Sarah lets her go.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You are such a child!

62 INT HALLWAY / CG DAY 62

Abigail pushes Anne along a long hallway.

ABIGAIL
I guess all the rapes were the hardest. Made me feel at their mercy, that I was nothing.

ANNE
You are not nothing. You are a dear person.

ABIGAIL
Thank you. You are so beautiful.

ANNE
Stop it. I am... you mock me.

ABIGAIL
I do not. If I was a man I would ravish you. Rrrrravish.

ANNE
Enough!

ABIGAIL
I am sorry.
Oh look.

Through the glass on a terrace outside, a SMALL QUINTET of young aristocratic boys play.

A middle aged man (MUSIC TEACHER) directs them. He has a riding crop and slaps it into legs and shoulders that are not doing what they should. But it's beautiful and fresh, joyful even. As are they.

Anne and Abigail watch through the window, entranced. Then Anne becomes melancholic, a reminder of her own losses.

ANNE
Make them stop.

ABIGAIL
What?

Anne suddenly gets up and starts banging on the window hard startling the young boys.

ANNE
Stop! Enough! Stop!

The music stops, the teacher and boys all freeze and stare at the Queen.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Enough!

ABIGAIL
Your Majesty?

ANNE
Depart! All of you!!

The teacher and boys, frightened by the Queen's outburst, start to leave the terrace.

Anne limps off. Abigail follows her.

ANNE (CONT'D)
I must rest.

ABIGAIL
Shall I...

ANNE
Leave me be!

63 INT GOLDEN HALLWAY / CG DAY 63

Anne limps along.

She sees a woman walking along the hall holding a baby (COURTIER - WOMAN WITH BABY).

ANNE
Give me that!

The woman can see it's the Queen, but seeing the crazy look in her eyes, instinctively resists handing the baby over.

WOMAN
Your Majesty I-

Anne grabs for it. The woman runs away from her, terrified. Anne suddenly realises she doesn't know where she is.

ANNE
Where am I?
Where am I?

Page Boy 1 steps forward startling Anne.

PAGE ONE
Your Majesty. You are in the west hallway.

She takes a swing at him, cuffing him in the side of the head.

ANNE
How dare you speak to me like that?!

Abigail suddenly appears beside her.

ABIGAIL
Your Majesty.

ANNE
Where did you go? Stupid girl.

She digs her fingers into Abigail's arm.

ABIGAIL
I'm sorry.

ANNE
Take me back.

64 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 64

Anne lies on her bed, depressed.

Abigail watches her. She eyes the crutches leaning on the wall.

ABIGAIL
Perhaps we should dance.

Anne sits bolt upright and stares at her, furious.

ANNE
You mock me!

Abigail holds out two crutches.

ABIGAIL
No. I just believe you can, that it would be cheering. And I would dearly like to dance with you.

Anne stares at her.

65 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 65

Anne and Abigail stand next to each other. They both tap their crutches three times.

They twirl.

Slowly at first, then more and more intensely, following each other.

Anne becomes flushed with joy as they whirl and crutch.

Abigail locks eyes with the Queen. It is intense. They fall over. They lie there hands clasped, eyes closed. Exhausted but happy.

The footman opens the door. Sarah enters. Sees it.

66 EXT PALACE GROUNDS / EG DAY 66

A shot rings out. A pigeon falls from the sky. A dog runs to retrieve it. Abigail and Sarah stand shooting.

SARAH
Twelve. Eleven. You are shooting exceptionally well Abigail.

ABIGAIL
You have taught me well.

SARAH
I hope you have not found your time with the Queen too tedious.

ABIGAIL
Not at all. And if it gives you rest I am happy. Did you sleep well?

SARAH
Like a shot badger.

ABIGAIL
Excellent.

SARAH
The Queen is... an extraordinary person, even if it is not readily apparent. She has been stalked by tragedy.

Abigail is startled.

ABIGAIL
She seems quite lovely.

SARAH
I will not burden you again.

ABIGAIL
I am quite happy to-

SARAH
I know you are. She will be angry if I do not appear soon. Take your shot.

Abigail looks at her steely eyed and then glances over to the boy with the pigeons in the cage.

ABIGAIL
Throw!

The boy lets go of the bird, and Abigail suddenly turns her gun and shoots at the bird barely half a foot from the cage. Sarah and the boy are shocked. Sarah's shoes are sprayed with the bird's blood.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Thirteen.

Sarah looks at her. Abigail shrugs with a laugh.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Don't know what came over me.

The Queen's Page (2) comes running through the field holding a note. He approaches Sarah and pauses momentarily.

SARAH
The Queen? I will be there directly.

The Page looks at the note, a bit lost.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What?

PAGE TWO
The Queen... asks for ...her.

He points to Abigail.

67 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 67

The door opens. Anne is excited.

ANNE
I have brought us up some lobsters, we will race them and then eat them!

SARAH
I hope you have three.

Anne sees her.

ANNE
Oh, hello.

SARAH
Well hello. You sent for Abigail to try and make me jealous I think.

ANNE
Perhaps.

Sarah grabs Anne by the throat and pushes her back. Anne can barely keep her feet and ends up slammed against the wall. Sarah looks at her, smiling.

She shoves her hand between Anne's legs.

ANNE (CONT'D)
They will be in with the lobsters in a minute.

SARAH
Scared?

Footsteps can be heard just outside the door. Neither Anne or Sarah moves, they just breathe, slightly aroused by the danger, waiting for the other to give in.

The doors swing open. Meg and Sally walk in carrying lobsters in white gloved hands. Meg's hand has a spot of blood on it where she's been nipped. Anne and Sarah pull their hands away from each other suddenly.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I think a moat is a bad idea. It is too old fashioned.

MEG
Maam, three rude and unruly crustaceans. Best with butter and lemon than to be played with, but as you will your majesty.

They put them on the ground.

68 INT BACKSTAIRS / WWS NIGHT 68

Abigail, carrying a tray with two glasses and a bottle of champagne, walks into the back stairwell and is tripped. They smash into tiny pieces. She looks up and sees Harley.

HARLEY
Hello. Remember me?

ABIGAIL
Mr Harley. You always unbalance me.

HARLEY
So what's been happening?

ABIGAIL
The Queen and Lady Marlborough are to race lobsters and then eat them.

HARLEY
Do you want to get punched?

ABIGAIL
The Queen will announce the doubling of the landholders tax to Parliament.

HARLEY
Do you jest?

ABIGAIL
I do not think she is certain of it though.

HARLEY
But Lady Marlborough is providing that certainty.

ABIGAIL
Yes.

HARLEY
And?

ABIGAIL
That is all.

HARLEY
Why do I feel that is not all?

Abigail suddenly has tears in her eyes.

ABIGAIL
I am trying my best, I am.

HARLEY
Alright, alright, turn off the tears. Thank you. Have a pleasant evening.

He walks off. Abigail instantly smiles wryly to herself.

69 INT PARLIAMENT DAY 69

Queen Anne stands before Parliament. She is about to speak. Sarah watches from the gallery. Harley rises suddenly.

HARLEY
May I speak a moment, with Her Majesty's pleasure? May I exhort the chamber to roar a mighty hurrah for Her Majesty in her brilliant decision to not raise the land tax.

There is a hurrah from the Tories. Anne is thrown a bit.

HARLEY (CONT'D)
For the doubling of the tax would have been a disaster, and the fields would have run with blood as the countryside rose up against our city friends. To add to the piling dead of our sons on the field of this war. Again to our Queen for her deep wisdom in knowing where to draw the line in holding our country together. For there is no point winning a war abroad if we are to start one at home.

The Tories hurrah.

Anne blushes. Sarah can't believe it. Anne looks at her paper.

HARLEY (CONT'D)
I apologise for the interruption Your Majesty. The floor is yours of course. We look forward to hearing what you have to say.

Anne looks down at her paper and then at Sarah, who motions her on. Anne clears her throat. Anne looks back at the paper. Is unsure what to do. Anne suddenly drops to the ground, as if she's fainted, silencing them all.

70 EXT WOODS DAY 70

Abigail is collecting flowers in the woods. She hears a noise, turns, but sees nothing. The wind whistles in the trees.

Then another sharp scurrying noise. She freezes. Silence. She scans the heavily wooded trees.

ABIGAIL
Who's there?

More scurrying and a sound like the cry of a wolf. She drops her basket, panic stricken.

MASHAM
Boo!

Abigail falls down, startled and terrified. Masham stands there laughing. She gets up and cracks him as hard as she can across the face. He is stunned. It hurt.

ABIGAIL
Men should not sneak up on women.

Abigail laughs.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
You look scared.

MASHAM
I am hurt. Look.

ABIGAIL
I have just now decided to marry you Masham.

MASHAM
I cannot marry a servant. I can enjoy one though.

He reaches for her. She suddenly knees him in the balls. He falls to his knees. She drops and kisses his twisted, pained mouth.

ABIGAIL
I know it would ruin you to marry me. I will fix things for us.

MASHAM
Who says I would marry you?

ABIGAIL
I am in your blood and you will not rest until I am pinned underneath you. But I will decide if and when that occurs.

She puts his hand on her breasts.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Say it is not so.

He grabs at her. She pulls away. Stands, her crotch at his face level.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Don't you think we are a good match?

She runs off, laughing. He chases her, tackles her to the ground. Is on top of her. They breath heavily.

MASHAM
I think a very good match.

He starts to push her dress up.

ABIGAIL
Wait, kiss me properly first.

They kiss. She rolls away.

She runs to a tree, he is in hot pursuit. She moves suddenly, tripping him as he reaches her. He topples down the hillock to the other side.

She looks down at him as he lies in the leaves.

Masham looks up at her.

MASHAM
I am enthralled by you.

ABIGAIL
Of course you are. I am stealing your horse now.

She walks off, taking his horse by the reins.

71 INT PARLIAMENT DAY 71

Empty Parliament. Anne sits looking forlorn with Sarah. Godolphin is nearby.

ANNE
I looked like a fool. They were all staring weren't they? I can tell even if I cannot see. And I heard the word fat. Fat.

SARAH
Anne.

ANNE
And ugly.

SARAH
No one but me would dare, and I did not. I felt for you. He set you up. It is our fault.

ANNE
I did not know what else to do. I could not... go through with it.

SARAH
It's fine Anne. It's fine.

Footman (5) and (6) bring in her sedan chair and take Anne out of the chamber as Sarah walks over to Godolphin.

SARAH (CONT'D)
He was ready for us.

GODOLPHIN
He probably just assumed you would have been working on the Queen.

SARAH
A minor hitch. We will reset the date.

72 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 72

Abigail walks around the room, slowly. She is still in her torn dress, admiring the ornate details of the Queen's possessions. She fingers the jewels on Anne's dressing table.

Smiles at the rabbits. Touches the silk bed clothes.

73 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 73

The Queen on a crutch limps through her salon and into her apartment. She stops in her tracks and sees a startled Abigail's head in her bed.

ABIGAIL
Oh Your Majesty.

ANNE
What are you doing?

ABIGAIL
Lady Marlborough asked me to wait for you and I was... and then the bed looked so beautiful and I was overcome... with, with foolishness. I am sorry.

ANNE
You may get out now.

Abigail gets out. She is naked.

She walks slowly over to her clothes. Anne watches as Abigail leisurely puts her clothes back on, basking in the attention.

ABIGAIL
Apologies again Your Majesty.

ANNE
What happened to your dress?

ABIGAIL
Wolves.

Abigail curtsies and exits.

74 INT ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM NIGHT 74

Abigail lies in bed. A banging on Abigail's door.

75 INT GOLDEN HALLWAY NIGHT 75

Abigail in her nightdress, barefoot, follows a Footman (2). Not sure what is happening.

76 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS NIGHT 76

Abigail is led into the Queen's apartments.

FOOTMAN 2
Her legs.

Abigail enters.

ANNE
Rub my legs.

Abigail starts to massage her legs.

ABIGAIL
Does it hurt a lot?

ANNE
(deadpan)
It is agony.

Abigail starts massaging higher and higher up Anne's legs.

Anne doesn't stop her.

ANNE (CONT'D)
(deadpan)
Oh the pain.

Abigail's hands disappear under Anne's night dress. Anne tilts her head back, closes her eyes.

CUT TO

77 INT SARAH'S QUARTERS NIGHT 77

Godolphin is at the door to Sarah's apartment. Sarah in her nightgown. He holds a letter.

GODOLPHIN
Marlborough has written. He is in position, the battle will begin any time.

Sarah takes and reads the letter quickly. A flicker of fear on her face.

GODOLPHIN (CONT'D)
He will prevail.

SARAH
Of course.

GODOLPHIN
I imagine you will not sleep tonight. I can stay and sit with you? I could regale you with witty tales of my romantic exploits, and by exploits I mean humiliations, and some weeping.

SARAH
You are sweet Godolphin which may explain the humiliations. I am alright.

She shuts the door.

Alone. Is agitated by the news.

She goes, opens the panel in the wall, steps through.

78 INT SECRET PASSAGEWAY NIGHT 78

Sarah walks quickly along the passageway. She reaches the door of the Queen's salon, takes her key and opens it.

SARAH
Mrs Morley?

79 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS NIGHT 79

There is no answer. Sarah gently opens the door to the room and sees the two women asleep in the bed.

80 INT SECRET PASSAGEWAY NIGHT 80

Sarah walks along the hallway, veers sideways, has to stop herself, hold herself up by the wall.

She continues walking in a daze. Stops.

A small sob cracks from her chest.

81 INT SARAH'S QUARTERS DAY 81

Abigail enters carrying a book, she walks happily into Sarah's quarters.

ABIGAIL
Good morning Lady Marlborough

Sarah is on a ladder examining some books on her bookshelf.

Sarah drops the heavy book she is holding. It grazes Abigail's shoulder. She is knocked to the floor, startled.

SARAH
Where is that book of poetry from the Dryden fellow? *

ABIGAIL
I do not-

Sarah starts throwing books off the shelves. They rain down on Abigail, striking her, one in the face.

SARAH
No! No! NO!

A thin line of blood trickles from Abigail's nose. Sarah drops from the ladder and lands next to her. Abigail pushes herself backwards along the floor, away from Sarah.

ABIGAIL
I do not understand.

SARAH
Did you take it? My book!

ABIGAIL
No I-

SARAH
I think you are a pretty little liar that I have misjudged.

Abigail realises what it's actually about.

Sarah grabs her by the face and squeezes it.

ABIGAIL
I did not mean for this to happen. The Queen, she is forceful and -

SARAH
You are dismissed from my service. Go back to Mrs Meg tell her to find you a position in the scullery. If she asks why, tell her 'Because I am a disloyal little bitch'.

Shocked and upset, Abigail takes a moment to compose herself. She curtsies.

ABIGAIL
As you wish your Ladyship. It has been my privilege and honour to -

SARAH
If you do not go, I will start kicking you and I will not stop.

Abigail nods, departs hurriedly.

We follow her into the hallway.

82 INT HALLWAY / A&E DAY 82

Abigail stands there, unsure of what to do. She suddenly hits herself hard in the face with the book she is holding. The blood starts to run again from her nose. Then tears. She checks her face in a mirror.

83 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 83

Anne is resting on a chaise lounge when she hears crying.

See gets up, walks with her crutch, opens the door and sees the bloodied and tearful Abigail, standing there.

84 INT PALACE COURTYARD / SF DAY 84

A carriage sits in the driveway. Anne is being carried in her sedan chair down the steps of the palace. Sarah walks next to her.

SARAH
You have become close to Abigail.

ANNE
She has been a dear. Yes.

SARAH
It is such a shame but I have dismissed her for theft. She is a liar and a thief.

Beat.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Your tongue seems uncharacteristically still.

ANNE
I heard you.

Abigail walks past Sarah and waits by the door of the Queen's carriage. Sarah stares at her, incredulous.

ANNE (CONT'D)
She is my servant, she is not dismissed. I have made her my Maid of the Bedchamber.

SARAH
Did you not hear what I said?

ANNE
You regard her as a liar and a thief.

SARAH
Yes!

ANNE
I do not. Obviously.

Sarah stares at Anne, pulls her close to her and whispers in her ear.

SARAH
You will dismiss her.

ANNE
(whispers back)
I will not. I like it when she puts her tongue inside me.

Sarah stands motionless, shocked by Anne's comment. Anne climbs in the carriage assisted by Abigail. Abigail gives Sarah the slightest hint of a smile. Gets in the carriage.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Go!

The carriage takes off, leaving Sarah standing there, stunned.

85 OMITTED 85

86 OMITTED 86

87 INT CARRIAGE DAY 87

Abigail reads to Anne in the curtained compartment. They sit together in happy contentment.

There is a sudden noise of banging on the carriage. Startling them.

CROWD 1 O/S
It's that fucking bitch! My sons a cripple you cunt!

CROWD 2 O/S
Stop the carnage you stuck up whore!

A startled Anne looks at Abigail.

ANNE
Don't they know who it is?

CROWD 3 O/S
Queen cunt!

ABIGAIL
I think they do.

Anne takes this in.

ANNE
Oh.

CROWD 4 O/S
Warmongering Slag!

She pulls back the curtain a little, a man with one eye stares back at her. Screams at her. A dozen other people run behind him chasing the carriage shouting. She shuts the curtain fast. Is shaken. Abigail moves quickly beside her. Holds her hand.

ANNE
What are they shouting?

ABIGAIL
Driver! Faster!
(to Anne)
Close your eyes. Sing a song with me. Will you be my Love? Do you know it? It is marvellous.

She cups a hand over one of Anne's ears, and sings into the other one distracting Anne from the noise outside.

Anne calms down a little bit, distracted, charmed, the noise starts to recede as the carriage speeds up. Anne curls into her.

88 OMITTED 88

89 INT MUD BATHS DAY 89

Anne is up to her neck in a large pool of bubbling mud. Abigail sits on a stool next to her.

ANNE
It is so strange to be in this.

ABIGAIL
It is good for you. The doctor says it will leach the toxins.

ANNE
What if I go to sleep and slip under?

ABIGAIL
Just imagine it is hot chocolate.

ANNE
At least I would die happy.

A door opens. Sarah enters in a robe. She lets it fall to the floor and enters the bath.

SARAH
After you left I thought, what a grand idea to take to the mud. To get whatever poisons one carries with one out.

She settles into the mud opposite Anne. Abigail and her eye each other.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Abigail could you fetch me some refreshment?

ABIGAIL
I would like of course but I must be at the Queen's side and behest at all times. It is my role.

SARAH
Such loyalty. How delightful it is when one tries to cultivate a new trait in one's character.

ANNE
Do not scratch at her.

Beat. They sit there a moment. Sarah takes a finger of mud and draws a moustache across her lip.

SARAH
Mr Freeman.

Anne laughs. Does the same with the mud.

ANNE
Mr Morley.

SARAH
How handsome you are.

ANNE
Oh Mr Freeman, you are handsome.

SARAH
Oh but I forgot my glasses.

She draws circles round her eyes. Anne laughs. Abigail tries to smile, join in, but is unnerved by it.

90 INT CARRIAGE DAY 90

The three of them travel back together. Anne and Sarah on one side. Abigail on the other. Anne sleeps. Sarah whispers very quietly, almost to herself.

SARAH
You will be back in the street.

Abigail looks out the window.

91 INT GOLDEN HALLWAY NIGHT 91

Sarah and Anne walk. Abigail follows, a step behind them.

SARAH
Remember when we were young and were not allowed out in the snow, and we opened all the windows in the ballroom and sat there as snow flurries just wafted in. And when your governess came in we were making a snowman and our hands were blue.

Anne laughs. Takes Sarah's hand and presses it.

ANNE
Oh that was such fun.

ABIGAIL
(mumbling)
Sounds marvellous.

SARAH
So many things we have done together.

ABIGAIL
(mumbling)
I do love ancient history.

ANNE
Abigail, did you say something?

ABIGAIL
I was singing. I cannot get a tune out of my head.

SARAH
Well there is so much room for it.

Abigail laughs uproariously.

ABIGAIL
Lady Marlborough. You are such a wit.

ANNE
You are a dear Abigail.
I shall retire for the evening.

ABIGAIL
(eagerly)
Shall I prepare your bed Queen Anne?

SARAH
Or shall you and I adjourn to your apartments for sherry?

A beat. She eyes them both. The moment of choice.

ANNE
A sherry sounds just the ticket.

Abigail's face falls.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Good night Abigail.

SARAH
Yes, good night dear Abigail.

Anne and Sarah walk off, hands clasped together. Leaving Abigail.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You are enjoying all this aren't you?

ANNE
To be beloved. Of course. To see you trying to win me. Why, what is not to love my dear?

SARAH
You will stop this ridiculous infatuation. You have made your point.

ANNE
Perhaps I was not making a point.

They look at each other. Anne kisses her suddenly.

92 INT ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM NIGHT 92

Abigail sits in a chair, focused but ranting. Masham sits next to her blithely smoking.

ABIGAIL
Perhaps because of my past, perhaps some malformation of my heart... I blame my father of course... cunt ..I must take control of my circumstance. I will need to act in a way that meets the edges of my morality. To trust is to risk, and when I end up living on the street selling my arsehole to syphilitic soldiers, steadfast morality will be a fucking nonsense that will mock me daily.

MASHAM
I'm not quite following.

ABIGAIL
Shhhhh.

He's hurt.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
I apologise. But... do shhhh when I'm thinking.

He nods.

93 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 93

Morning. Abigail brushes Anne's hair.

ABIGAIL
Your hair is so lustrous. It is something people in court comment on.

ANNE
Really. I always thought of it as nest like.

Sarah enters.

ABIGAIL
(to Anne)
I shall make you tea.

Abigail goes to a side table where pots and cups are.

SARAH
What a lovely idea. Thank you Abigail.

ABIGAIL
Of course.

ANNE
(to Sarah)
Pat the kids hello.

Sarah eyes her, and the rabbits. It is a challenge and she knows it. She smiles.

SARAH
Of course.

She leans over the little temporary rabbit hutch and pats them, grimacing. Anne smiles.

Abigail takes some Lily of the Valley flowers from her apron. She pushes them into the pot adding hot water and tea making sure that the two women don't notice it.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You will give that speech on the tax increase in parliament next week.

ANNE
I dreamed of the man on the roadside with one eye.

SARAH
What man?

ANNE
When we drove through town. He stared at me in such a way. I felt my blood chill.

Abigail takes a cup of tea over to Sarah.

SARAH
So kind.

Sarah drinks her tea. Takes a petit four, tosses it in the air and catches it in her mouth.

Abigail smiles at Sarah, unnerving her.

ANNE
Abigail. Do you think people are angry?

SARAH
Anne! She does not know.

ANNE
We should ask people. Bring a group of people from the villages in and ask them.

SARAH
That is not how matters of state are dealt with. People are led, they do not lead!
Would you leave Marlborough exposed? He needs another battalion ready to join him. And that means money.

ANNE
Do not yell at me! I am the Queen!

SARAH
Then for once act like it!

Sarah walks out.

94 EXT STABLES DAY 94

Sarah walks through the garden. Horses are being prepared to be ridden. Masham stands there holding two horses. Is about to speak.

MASHAM
Is the Queen to-

SARAH
Do not speak to me.

Sarah mounts a horse and takes off.

She grimaces as she rides. A slight pain in her stomach.

95 EXT WOODS DAY 95

Sarah is galloping through a wooded area.

Sarah suddenly doubles over with pain, a flop sweat breaking out across her face. She pulls the horse to a walk. Sarah blinks hard trying to pull herself together. She suddenly throws up.

The horse starts to gallop. She pulls listlessly at the reins.

Her bowels suddenly open noisily. She topples over. Gets her foot caught in the stirrup. The horse gallops on as her head hits the ground and she is dragged, unconscious.

96 INT GOLDEN HALLWAY DAY 96

Abigail walks the hallway determinedly. Shrieking, giggling and yelling can be heard. A pomegranate comes flying out of the doorway of a room ahead. It hits the wall and smashes bloody pink seeds everywhere.

97 INT DRAWING ROOM DAY 97

A group of painted up Tories including Harley have a young man naked (POMEGRANATE TORY) and are playing dodgeball with him, using pomegranates as balls. The wall is spattered bright pink. The young man tries to dodge but gets hit with one. He goes down and they all slam more pomegranates into him.

Abigail appears in the doorway.

The men all yell lewd things at her.

A pomegranate juice spattered Harley comes to her.

ABIGAIL
I have thought on the terms of our friendship.

HARLEY
I thought it was unconditional love.

ABIGAIL
I will get you an audience with the Queen if you ask her a favour for me.

HARLEY
Wench. You will-

ABIGAIL
Harley you do not need me as an enemy. As it turns out I am capable of much unpleasantness.

HARLEY
As am I.

ABIGAIL
(angrily)
It's so tiring to be like this!
(calmer)
The Queen has taken a shine to me and I will drip poison into her ear regarding you, until she is mad with hatred for you. Or we will have a mutually advantageous friendship. Count of three. Yes or no?

He stares at her.

HARLEY
If you are so close to the Queen, why not just ask this favour yourself?

ABIGAIL
I do not want her to ever think I want anything from her.

HARLEY
And have you counselled her for our side?

ABIGAIL
No.

HARLEY
Why not? The country's future hangs in the balance.

ABIGAIL
Uh huh. My thing is what I wish to talk about.

HARLEY
You do not care? I thought you were on our side.

ABIGAIL
I am on my side. Always. Sometimes it is a happy coincidence for you. Like now, you will get a chance to save the country.

98 EXT WOODS NIGHT 98

The horse walks through the woods. The woods are thicker now, darker.

In the moonlight they pass a man fucking a woman against a tree. The woman MAE, watches impassively as the horse drags Sarah past her. The man pulls up his pants and goes.

Mae leaves her tree, walks, takes a look at Sarah, then takes the horse's lead and leads it away, Sarah dragging along behind it.

99 EXT PALACE LAWNS / SF DAY 99

Harley walks beside the Queen.

HARLEY
What tremendous luck to find you in the garden.

ANNE
We were taking the air.

Abigail watches on from a distance.

HARLEY
You do not like the war. I know that.

ANNE
No. I do not. But we must... fight... for what we fight for.

HARLEY
Godolphin and Lady Marlborough seem to have corralled you, so that you do not get to hear from your loyal opposition.

ANNE
I am briefed appropriately.

HARLEY
Were it in person I'd believe it.

ANNE
I am often ill.

HARLEY
True. Sadly true. The war with the French will bleed us dry even if we win. We are in our strongest position now. If Marlborough loses this next battle we could lose all.

Anne takes this in for a beat.

HARLEY (CONT'D)
The people hate the war you realise. They begin to hate you.

Anne is quiet as she considers what Harley is saying.

HARLEY (CONT'D)
Lady Marlborough has not told you of the riots in Leeds?

ANNE
No. But there was a man with one eye that was...very distressing.

HARLEY
All I ask is that you search your heart.

ANNE
Of course.

HARLEY *
Not Lady Marlborough's heart. Your own. I must also talk to you of * your maid. *

ANNE *
Abigail. *

HARLEY *
I believe that is her name. It * seems Colonel Masham has fallen for * her, he wishes to marry. *

ANNE *
But she is a maid. *

HARLEY *
It is irregular and inexplicable * but being sentimental I am moved to * help if possible. *

100 OMITTED 100

101 INT DRAWING ROOM DAY 101

Anne has gathered with Godolphin, Masham and a few soldiers. Abigail stands nearby.

ANNE
What do you mean she has not been seen?!

MASHAM
She took a horse. It did not come back and nor did she.

Anne takes this in, as does Abigail.

GODOLPHIN
I shall send riders.

ANNE
I think she means to vex me. Do not send riders.

GODOLPHIN
In case she has fallen though.

ANNE
She is too good a rider too fall. I know what she is... Do not seek her.

102 INT BROTHEL BEDROOM DAY 102

Sarah is sweating and feverish, she has an open wound gouged into her cheek and bruises and abrasions. She comes to, opens her eyes. A man with his trousers down is fucking a woman against the wall from behind across from her. Mae sits beside her sips from a flask of whisky.

SARAH
Where am I?

MAE
You're in heaven. That's God. You'll meet him later.

SARAH
I must... go.

Sarah tries to get up but throws up over herself.

MAE
I don't think that's happening. Lie back.

Mae takes her flask.

MAE (CONT'D)
Stop infection.

She pours some on Sarah's wound. Intense pain shoots through Sarah. She passes out.

103 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS NIGHT 103

Anne wakes up bathed in sweat, struggling for breath, clutching at her chest. She rings the bell by her bedside. Footman 3 comes in.

ANNE
Get Lady Marlborough.

He goes to leave but before he can she screams.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Just take.. me to her!

104 INT GOLDEN HALLWAY NIGHT 104

Footman 3 wheels the Queen in her chair as she writhes in pain, struggling for breath, panicky. They enter Sarah's quarters. No Sarah.

ANNE
Find her!

105 INT SARAH'S QUARTERS NIGHT 105

The Footman (3) searches vainly, in cupboards, under the bed. He shrugs at Anne. She closes her eyes.

106 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS NIGHT 106

Anne sits up on her bed, her breathing labored. Pails of hot water steam up the room helping her breathing. Sally and Mrs Meg bring in more steaming pails set them down and leave the room. Abigail rubbing a cream into her back as the doctor takes her pulse. Godolphin stands by.

ANNE
We must look for her! She could die out there! There are wolves out there are there not?

GODOLPHIN
No Your Majesty. I don't think so. There are bandits and...

ANNE
I think there are wolves! Find her!

She slumps back in her bed.

107 EXT PALACE GROUNDS / SF NIGHT 107

Ten riders some military, some courtiers head into the forest with lit torches. Godolphin, in his robe, watches them depart.

108 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 108

Anne sits on a chair in the middle of the room, she is dressed and her symptoms have passed. Harley and Godolphin facing her. Abigail sits off to one side, feeding Godolphin's duck bits of fruit.

ANNE
No one knows where she is?

GODOLPHIN
No one has heard or seen of her.

ANNE
I thought she was...

She gets up. Goes to her rabbits.

ANNE (CONT'D)
What if she is-

ABIGAIL
Perhaps she has gone to Blenheim, her palace?

GODOLPHIN
There is no palace yet. It is the woods.

HARLEY
Well we should check in the trees just to be sure.

ANNE
Mr Harley!

HARLEY
I apologise. I hope we find her, and she is not dead in a ditch. The business of state however cannot stop. The Prime Minister has a ludicrous and costly idea to-

GODOLPHIN
Your majesty. There has been no word from the front in two weeks. There is no doubt that Marlborough is in trouble. We need to send a division immediately to help him.

HARLEY
(to Godolphin)
Costing a fortune, and built on your paranoia and walking into God know what? The messengers could've been killed, found a whore they liked the taste of. Or it could all be done and we have lost and they walk into an ambush.

GODOLPHIN
Your Majesty I beg of you. Immediate action is needed. Funds, men.

Anne shifts uncomfortably, unused to dealing with things without Sarah.

HARLEY
We need to wait.

ANNE
I... well... I will... think on it for a-

GODOLPHIN
This cannot wait. We need to act now.

Beat. Anne nods, but struggles as to what to do. Abigail suddenly speaks up from her position seated at the wall.

ABIGAIL
Is it somewhat like going late to a party. If the party's going well, they did not need you and resent the intrusion. If it is going badly, you cannot save it, but tend to get excruciatingly bored and regret you ever put on your nice gown for it.

They look over at her.

GODOLPHIN
It is not like a party!

ABIGAIL
I'm sorry Prime Minister, a passing thought.

ANNE
I think it is like a party.

HARLEY
A perfect analogy.

ANNE
We will wait. But they should be in their dresses ready to go at a moments notice. Shift a division to the coast and have a boat at the ready.

Godolphin, furious, walks to his duck and picks up the lead.

109 INT BROTHEL BEDROOM DAY 109

Sarah pushes herself upright, she is a bit better, but still weak. She steadies herself, across the room. The big man, God, real name Kevin, sits there.

She picks up a hand mirror and looks at the damage to her face. The gouge has a couple of rough stitches in it and has scabbed over.

SARAH
Boy. Fetch me a carriage.

He looks at up her. Shrugs.

KEVIN
Mae says no.

SARAH
I'm leaving. Help me up.

KEVIN
Shut up. Or I'll give you something to do with your mouth.

Sarah stands up. He stands up. He pulls a hard leather cosh out of his pocket, lazily smashes the cup that sits on a table next to him. Stares at her.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Mae says no. Mae says no.

SARAH
Why don't you think for yourself?

KEVIN
I can hurt you if I have to. She said. But I get to decide if I have to. So that is thinking for myself.

Mae enters the room.

MAE
Feeling better then?

SARAH
Is my horse alive or did you eat it?

MAE
I sold it. Still didn't pay for your upkeep. But you look better. Don't worry about the face, some men like that. Not many, but some.

SARAH
Thank you for your kindness but I need to leave.

MAE
You still owe me though. You can suck for your supper from now on. I'll take twenty percent. You seem posh, gents will like that.

SARAH
Have you ever seen ten gold sovereigns?

MAE
In my dreams.

SARAH
Go to Hyde Park fountain at nine in the morning and you'll see a man walking a duck.

110 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS NIGHT 110

Anne lies in bed, a bit feverish. Abigail sits with her. A cold compress on her head. Anne's eyes flip open.

ANNE
Abigail. I worry something has befallen her. It is night. Out there alone.

ABIGAIL
She is strong. She will be fine.

ANNE
Yes, yes, she will. She saved me my whole life. Without her I am nothing.

She seems devastated.

ABIGAIL
That is not true. You are the Queen.

ANNE
I am tired. It hurts, everything hurts. Everyone leaves me. Dies. Finally her.

She closes her eyes for a beat. Then suddenly opens them. An anger in them this time.

ANNE (CONT'D)
If she is not dead, I will cut her throat. She may be trying to hurt me, make me dissolve and dissemble and... I will not!

ABIGAIL
Sssh. She is fine. They will find her.

ANNE
I do not care. You are such a beautiful person. You glow with... loveliness. We must marry you.

ABIGAIL
What?

ANNE
Colonel Masham wishes to marry you.

ABIGAIL
He does?

ANNE
Yes. You have captured him.

ABIGAIL
That is... absurd. I have nothing to offer. I am a penniless servant. It would be career suicide.

ANNE
Your first thought is for him? You are a darling.

ABIGAIL
I care for him. Not as I care for you, but enough to marry. I will not lie, I would like to be a Lady again. I am not perfect.

ANNE
Yes. Yes.

She gets up.

ANNE (CONT'D)
This is right. While she is gone. If we wait she will return and yell and stomp about it. But you must have this. It is a gift I give you and I demand you take it.

ABIGAIL
Of course. When will-

ANNE
Now! Of course it must be now!

111 INT CHAPEL NIGHT 111

A garland of white flowers sits on Abigail's head. Abigail's face is masked by her veil. Her and Masham stand in front of a chaplain.

Anne and Harley are the only guests. Harley is unmade up. Sleep in his eyes.

MASHAM
I, Samuel Masham, take thee, Abigail Hill, to be my lawful wedded wife.

ABIGAIL
I, Abigail Hill, take thee, Samuel Masham, to be my lawful wedded husband.

Masham places the ring on Abigail's finger.

MASHAM
With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow.

They kiss. Anne applauds, as does Harley.

112 INT PRIVY PURSE OFFICE NIGHT 112

Abigail sits at the table. She enters "2000 Guineas" into a ledger. Anne, Harley and Masham look on.

ABIGAIL
It is most generous. I am overwhelmed.

ANNE
Shall we say 'gambling debts' Mr Harley?

HARLEY
Excellent.

Abigail writes 'gambling debts' against the figure. She turns the ledger around to Harley. Harley signs off on it. Anne hands Abigail a promissory note with a seal on it.

ANNE
You are to take apartments on the east wing.

MASHAM
Thank you Your Majesty.

Abigail smiles. Jumps up and down happily.

ABIGAIL
Thank you! Thank you!

They pop champagne.

ANNE
It is fun to be Queen sometimes.

HARLEY
One can only imagine.

113 INT ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM NIGHT 113

Masham lies on the bed, semi naked. Abigail's at the window staring out into the darkness.

MASHAM
You're looking the wrong way.

ABIGAIL
Where could she have gone? You rode through the forest looking for her?

MASHAM
I have told you before.

ABIGAIL
She would be sick, for several days, but she would be near recovered by now.

MASHAM
She probably went back to Southampton.

ABIGAIL
To do what? To plan what? To get ready, to-

MASHAM
I am as hard as a rock and it is our wedding night!

She goes and sits on the bed. He reaches for her. She pushes him away.

ABIGAIL
Lie still.

She puts her hand under the sheet and gives him a hand job as she continues talking.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Now she is gone I find myself more concerned than when she was here. For it is like she could strike from anywhere at anytime, and I will not see it coming.

He moans.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Sssh. I must be calm. She is gone, I am married. But I must be ready and yet how to be ready when one does not see the enemy. My life is a maze I continually think I have found a way out of, only to find another corner in front of me.

He groans loudly. Cums. She stares blankly ahead.

114 OMITTED 114

114A INT BROTHEL CORRIDOR DAY 114A

A bemused Godolphin leading a duck follows MAE past semi naked whores and clients.

115 INT BROTHEL DAY 115

Sarah sits on her bed. The door opens, it's Mae with Godolphin and his duck.

Godolphin barks out a laugh.

GODOLPHIN
What happened, are you alright?

SARAH
That cunt Abigail poisoned me, Mary Magdalene found me.

GODOLPHIN
Did they rape you?

SARAH
No they didn't, but gainful employment is on offer should I need it.

GODOLPHIN
Abigail did this?

SARAH
Yes. How goes the Kingdom?

GODOLPHIN
The Queen is considering a peace treaty offer to the French. And to switch two positions in cabinet to them. Harley suddenly has her ear.

SARAH
Had. Had her ear. Take me home.

She stands. Nods to Kevin who nods back. She exits.

116 INT DRAWING ROOM EVENING 116

A court tea. A dozen Ladies including Abigail in a new dress are talking and having tea.

A young boy sits at a piano playing as a woman accompanies him in song. She finishes and there is polite applause. The Ladies go back to talking.

They are suddenly aware of Sarah walking into the room.

SARAH
Ladies.

All the Ladies stop talking and look to her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Well, I could always silence a room.

Abigail stands.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Oh dear, the servant is dressed in the clothes of a Lady. How whimsical. Is it a game of some sort?

Some of the Ladies titter.

ABIGAIL
Lady Sarah, my dear friend and cousin, how good to see you have returned from...?

SARAH
Hell. I'm sure you will pass through it sometime.

ABIGAIL
You have missed a few things. My marriage. It was a simple affair but beautifully done.

SARAH
Everyone leave.

Abigail stays where she is as the others depart.

SARAH (CONT'D)
If you offer me tea, you'll forgive me if I shan't accept.

ABIGAIL
I searched my heart and I did not have trust in it and that is my shame. I could not just stand by and let you destroy me. You maybe taught me that. But it is over now. I have won, I am safe. We do not need to fight anymore. Is that not grand? If you just forgive me, we can be happy together.

Sarah slaps her three times across the face. Abigail falls to the floor. She looks up at Sarah.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Obviously you have some anger to expiate. I will allow it this once.

Sarah smiles at her.

SARAH
Congratulations on your wedded bliss.

She walks out. Abigail lies on the floor. Smiles to herself

117 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS NIGHT 117

Anne is asleep in bed. Sarah unlocks the secured door and enters. She sits on the bed. Watches Anne for a second. Leans over and blows air in her face.

Anne flickers awake. Stares at her, stunned.

ANNE
Your face.

SARAH
Do I look that bad? If I was a man it would seem quite dashing, a scar like this.

ANNE
Where have you been Sarah? Why did you leave like that?

SARAH
I went riding, some bandits attacked me, it took me a while to fight them off.

ANNE
Your poor face.

SARAH
You should see them. And you have been well I trust? Well taken care of. Men were eventually sent to find me I hear.

ANNE
I worried for you. I... thought you were... You did not do it to hurt me?

SARAH
I do not play games with you.

ANNE
I know. I know.

Anne gets up and moves to her night table puts on a robe. Sarah goes to her takes her hand, gently.

SARAH
Look at me. I will say this plainly and once my dearest one, you must send Abigail away.

Anne stares at her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
From my heart Mrs Morley. Do it.

ANNE
I do not want to.

SARAH
She is a viper.

ANNE
You are jealous, it is very sweet. You always said I needed too much love from you. Now with you both I have enough. Please accept that. Love her as me. You have been rather mean to her, I would also like that to change.

SARAH
You will do as I tell you.

A loud knock on the door.

FOOTMAN O/S
The Prime Minister and Mr Harley!

SARAH
Not -

A footman opens the door.

Harley and Godolphin enter. Godolphin clutching a note.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What is it!?

HARLEY
A thousand pardons your Majesty. But word from the front.

SARAH
What has happened?

GODOLPHIN
Marlborough is ready, he has them outflanked. He needs a garrison to attack the coast.

SARAH
We must prepare quickly.

HARLEY
The Queen has already readied a garrison.

ANNE
Let them go to the party now.

Sarah is caught off guard.

SARAH
What...party?

GODOLPHIN
Of course your majesty.

ANNE
It happened while you were gone. Thank you gentleman, keep me informed of all progress.

Anne is pleased and bolstered by her decision

SARAH
You may leave. I would like to speak to the Queen alone.

ANNE
Yes. Leave us.

They bow and make their way to the exit.

HARLEY
It is good to see you home and looking so well Lady Marlborough.

They traipse out. Sarah composes herself. The doors shut.

SARAH
Now, You did very well with the divisions.

ANNE
I know I did.

SARAH
However the two new Cabinet positions they must stay with the whigs.

ANNE
I am the Queen. Do not try to... do that thing you do.

SARAH
Do not try to manage this as you cannot. I know Harley has been in your ear and Abigail in your - *

ANNE
Enough!
You must be as I wish you to be now. Do you understand?

SARAH
Anne

Sarah takes her hand, tries to pull her into a kiss. Anne pushes her away.

ANNE
Don't.

Sarah pushes her against the wall.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Your face frightens me. Don't.

They struggle, Sarah pushing herself on Anne, Anne spinning her, so that Sarah lands on the ground on her arse.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Good night Lady Marlborough.

SARAH
You do not do this! You do not!

Anne leaves and walks away. The door opens, where Sarah sees Abigail is holding it open. The Queen exits, the door shuts.

118 OMITTED 118

119 INT SARAH'S QUARTERS NIGHT 119

Sarah lies in bed awake, staring at the ceiling. She has a face plaster over her injury now. She gets up, goes to her drawer and pulls out bundles of letters.

120 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 120

Anne blinks awake. As Sarah throws back the drapes.

SARAH
Morning.

ANNE
Morning.

SARAH
I think I'm becoming quite sentimental as I get older.

ANNE
I don't think you have the capacity for sentimentality.

SARAH
I didn't think so either, but so much is surprising me lately. I started looking over some of the many, many, many letters you've written to me.

She pulls some out, starts quoting from them.

SARAH (CONT'D)
'I long for your embrace', 'I long for the heat from your naked body on mine.' Very intense. Very... explicit.

ANNE
What are you-

SARAH
I thought I'd misplaced some of them the other day. Quite a fright. What if say that son of a bitch Jonathan Swift got them? In his newspaper the next day? You would be ruined.

Anne stares at her.

ANNE
You would never.

SARAH
You have no idea what I would do for my country. And for you.

ANNE
Ruin me? You would do that? *

SARAH
I will use these letters unless you announce the tax rise, change the Cabinet as I wish, and get rid of Abigail.

She gets up and leaves.

121 INT PARLIAMENT DAY 121

The Whigs and Tories gather on either side of the Parliament. They wait.

122 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 122

Abigail is dressing Anne for the Parliament. Anne sits, staring out the window. Abigail lifts the crown, briefly pops it on her head, likes the look of it. She walks over to Anne.

ANNE
Do you not wish to know what I have decided?

ABIGAIL
I wish to know you are happy and that your spirit will lighten once this is done.

123 INT SARAH'S QUARTERS DAY 123

Sarah stands by her desk getting ready.

She looks at the pile of Anne's letters, flips one open. Reads it. She smiles. Tears well up in her eyes.

Suddenly takes the letters and throws them in the fire.

A Courtier (SPEAKING COURTIER) enters.

COURTIER
The Queen requests the return of your key. You will return it and vacate Court today.

SARAH
Where is she?

COURTIER
You are to hand over the key. The Queen will not grant you an audience.

She takes the key from around her waist and hands it to him.

124 INT SECRET PASSAGEWAY DAY 124

Sarah walks fast down the secret hallway. She bangs on the door.

Sarah peers through the keyhole. She can see Anne sitting on her bed.

SARAH
Anne! I handed over my key.

Anne ignores her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You are angry I know. I am sorry. I went quite mad for a moment. Just open the door.

Anne ignores her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I burnt the letters. I burnt them.
Do what you will.

Sarah hears Anne get up and come to the door. She waits.

Anne considers opening the door, but stops herself.

She presses her forehead on the door.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I will not come back. Do you understand! I will go and be gone!
Abigail has done this.
She does not love you!

ANNE
Because how could anyone? She wants nothing from me! Unlike you.

SARAH
She wants nothing from you, and yet somehow she is a Lady with two thousand a year, and Harley sits on your knee most nights.

ANNE
I wish you would love me as she does.

SARAH
You wish me to lie to you?!
'Oh you look like an angel that fell from heaven your Majesty'. No!
Some days you look like a badger.
And you can rely on me to tell you.

ANNE
Why?!

SARAH
Because I will not lie! That is love!

Anne stops a beat.

ANNE
I must go attend to my duties.

Walks out of the room.

125 INT SECRET PASSAGEWAY DAY 125

A dazed Sarah walks back along the hallway.

126 INT PARLIAMENT DAY 126

Whigs on one side. Tories on the other. Anne enters. They all stand. They all bow. She takes her papers out. Looks at them.

Godolphin looks for Sarah. Anne clears her throat.

ANNE
I have. I have over the last several months been unhappy with the government. Lord Godolphin has lost my confidence. Therefore I am announcing the new Prime Minister will be Mr. Harley. Godolphin, I thank you for your service. We will sue for peace with France immediately.
I have spoken. All depart.

A shell-shocked silence. Then all hell breaks loose, as Anne walks from the stage.

Comes out into:

127 INT SARAH'S QUARTERS DAY 127

Servants and Footman (2) are in her apartments, piling things into boxes. Sarah stares at them. Abigail stands by supervising. She has the key around her waist. A servant moves a couch. *

ABIGAIL
Leave that. I like it.

Abigail smiles at Sarah.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
I am moving in.
The rug stays too.

SARAH
Oh my God. You actually think you have won.

ABIGAIL
Haven't I?

Abigail twirls the key.

SARAH
We were playing very different games.

ABIGAIL
Well, all I know is, your carriage awaits and my maid's on her way up with something called a pineapple.

128 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS NIGHT 128

Anne stands alone by the window.

She watches as Sarah walks past outside, servants carrying her bags. A sadness on her face.

129 INT CARRIAGE / SF NIGHT 129

Sarah sits in the carriage, luggage beside her. She looks back at the palace. Hoping Anne might come out, for some reprieve.

DRIVER
Go?

Sarah waits a moment longer. Then, sadly.

SARAH
Go.

The carriage pulls away.

CUT TO

ONE MONTH LATER

130 OMITTED- MOVED TO 137A 130

131 OMITTED- MOVED TO 137B 131

132 OMITTED- MOVED TO 137C 132

133 OMITTED 133

134 INT GREAT HALL NIGHT 134

A dinner party is going on. An acrobat performs. Abigail holds court at the head of the table. She is a bit drunk. A MAGICIAN makes fire come out his mouth.

ABIGAIL
Do it again!

He does. She excitedly picks up a glass and hurls at the wall. It smashes. Everyone roars with laughter. And follows suit. She goes and sits on a soldier's lap. Masham watches her. A courtier comes to her.

135 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS NIGHT 135

Anne is at a table, she is trying to work on papers. She can't see clearly and uses a magnifying glass. One of her arms hangs limply at her side. Abigail trips over as she enters.

ABIGAIL
Ow... I am here.

ANNE
Do my legs please.

ABIGAIL
Of course.
(to the maid)
Hot towels now!

Abigail goes and gets a silver dish of the paste. She wobbles a bit as she walks.

ANNE
Are you drunk?

ABIGAIL
I have had wine. Very good wine. I could get you some. It would ease you.

ANNE
No.

Abigail starts massaging the paste into her legs..

ANNE (CONT'D)
I do not understand these... papers.

ABIGAIL
I am feeling unwell. Excuse me a moment.

Abigail suddenly gets up, goes and throws up in a nearby vase.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Sorry. I am unwell.

ANNE
Lay down and I will fetch the doctor my love.

ABIGAIL
Thank you.

Abigail lays on the couch. Anne winces in pain. Tries to refocus on the papers. Abigail starts snoring.

136 OMITTED 136

137 INT. SARAH'S SOUTHAMPTON HOUSE DAY 137

Sarah is sitting, staring at the Blenheim model. Godolphin is with her.

GODOLPHIN
How is early retirement?

SARAH
Dull. What goes on?

GODOLPHIN
They have brokered a peace with the French, giving up too much of course.

SARAH
Of course.

GODOLPHIN
Marlborough returns in a week.

SARAH
Harley will move to have him replaced.

GODOLPHIN
...I hadn't seen it, but of course.

SARAH
I will rip his mole from his face. You must stop it Godolphin.

GODOLPHIN
I only have so much sway without you there.

SARAH
I will tell you how, and you must use my words.

GODOLPHIN
It would be easier to pull my strings if you were back at court.

Beat

GODOLPHIN (CONT'D)
Obviously you have chosen to keep the particulars of your dismissal from me. I shall leave a gap in the conversation for you to remedy that.

BEAT.

GODOLPHIN (CONT'D)
I do not know of women and their feelings. But I know they nurse their hurts like wailing newborns.

SARAH
Godolphin, I feel a surge of desire to see your nose broken. Your point?

GODOLPHIN
A letter. An apology of some sort that facilitates your return.

Beat.

SARAH
There are limits to what one can give.

GODOLPHIN
You once told me quite the opposite.

Beat

SARAH
How is Anne? Happy?

GODOLPHIN
She seems...as mercurial as ever. Her health suffers however.

Sarah considers this.

137A INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 137A

Anne sits in a chair, a rug on her knees, she is asleep, her left arm hangs limply be her side. She snaps awake, focuses and is slightly surprised to see she is surrounded by a dozen members of the cabinet. Harley holds court.

HARLEY
Now that the peace with France has been made-

A cheer goes up from half the cabinet. Godolphin looks glum.

HARLEY (CONT'D)
Marlborough's return back to England is imminent. I wonder Your Majesty whether it is right that he is left as head of our forces?

Godolphin is outraged.

GODOLPHIN
He is a hero who won the peace for us!

HARLEY
Indeed. But he would have launched us into a bloody war that would have ruined us. So there's that.

GODOLPHIN
We have made a poor peace that we will rue.

Anne grunts and tries to compose herself, sit up. Sally comes and picks her arm up and places it on the pillow on her lap. Harley forges on.

HARLEY
Well, our people are happy. I suggest, Queen Anne, that as a gesture of our graciousness to France perhaps he should be stood aside? A new era of peace and prosperity, a new day, a door to a new future, metaphors abound.

GODOLPHIN
It will look like we surrendered and the palace will be surrounded with men who lost eyes and arms in the war angry at this slight on their leader.

ANNE
Men with...

GODOLPHIN
They will stare in at us with rage.

HARLEY
What a preposterous idea Godolphin. What are you-

ANNE
I...a...am tired...I will ponder it. Thank you all.

Harley bows. The members of cabinet begin to file out.

Godolphin lingers.

GODOLPHIN
Your Majesty, may I broach the matter of Lady Marlborough?

ANNE
No. You may not.

GODOLPHIN
A breach in a dear friendship, surely this could be healed?

ANNE
Some wounds will not close. I have many such. One just walks around with them. Sometimes one can feel them filling with blood.

Beat.

GODOLPHIN
Quite. Lady Marlborough is a woman of passion. Perhaps she behaved rashly and is apologetic for her behaviors?

ANNE
You know this?

GODOLPHIN
I... believe it to be so.

Anne takes this in.

GODOLPHIN (CONT'D)
Her love and loyalty to you and this country are her reasons for living. Perhaps she could write you and we could attempt to repair at least one wound in our Queen?

ANNE
I cannot stop her. I would imagine it is pointless and I would dash the letter into the fire. But... I cannot stop her.

Godolphin nods with a small smile.

137B INT PRIVY PURSE OFFICE DAY 137B

A noisy rabble stand before Abigail, pressing their claims.

ABIGAIL
Shut up please.
SHUT UP!

Harley enters. The room silences.

HARLEY
A moment.

ABIGAIL
We will reconvene with some order and grace after lunch.

137C EXT GARDENS DAY 137C

Abigail walks with Harley.

ABIGAIL
I cannot control them. Whining for more.

HARLEY
Marlborough will return soon.

ABIGAIL
What is that to me? Your politics is dreary Harley. I have what I want, you have what you want. Our business is done.

HARLEY
If Marlborough remains head of our forces she has every right to be at court. Even if she is at odds with the Queen.

ABIGAIL
I see.

HARLEY
I imagined you would.
The Queen and her must not have the opportunity to repair this wedge between them. For if they do I pity what Lady Marlborough will make of you. If there was some gentle nudge you might provide to the Queen's cogitations on this issue.

Abigail nods.

138 INT SARAH'S SOUTHAMPTON HOUSE DAY 138

Sarah sits at her desk, she dips a pen in an ink well, puts it to the paper, but cannot begin. The ink just runs into a blob. She casts that sheet of paper aside. Starts again.

'You cunt'

And starts again...

'God I miss you'

And again...

'I dreamt I stabbed you in the eye'

And again...

'My dearest Mrs Morley'

She continues writing the letter.

139 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 139

A pile of mail, Anne is on the bed surrounded by rabbits. She is, casting aside letters manically with her good hand. Nothing. Abigail has entered and is watching.

ANNE
(TO FOOTMAN 4)
Are you sure this is all the mail?

ABIGAIL
You seek something?

ANNE
No. A...fabric piece from my cousin in Florence.

ABIGAIL
I'm sure it will come.

The footman (4) nods. Abigail signals him to leave. She stands with the privy purse books.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Everyone is on the bed. Shall I join?

ANNE
Of course.

She sits. Takes the Queen's hand.

ABIGAIL
I am in a quandary and you are my dearest one. I do not know whether to speak of...

ANNE
What is it?

ABIGAIL
I will... I am not sure.

ANNE
I do not like this, you will lodge this unknowable thing in my brain and it will eat me with horrible possibilities.

ABIGAIL
It is not horrible dear Anne. It is just money.

ANNE
Money?

ABIGAIL
I have found in the books, large amounts of money that seem to have flowed to Marlborough. But is not reflected in the forces receipts of expenses.

ANNE
What?

ABIGAIL
It is gone. I did not know who's attention to bring it to. Shall I request it back on his return? Quietly perhaps?

ANNE
You are saying Sarah diverted money to him?

ABIGAIL
It does seem so. Some seven thousand.

Anne looks at her a beat. Utterly certain.

ANNE
She would not.

ABIGAIL
It is just-

ANNE
She would not!

Anne stares at her, like she sees through her suddenly. Abigail scrambles.

ABIGAIL
I am of course, perhaps mistaken in the bookkeeping. Sometimes all these numbers are dizzying. And they often do add up on second or third attempt. They are as fickle as humans. A simple explanation I am not seeing. We shall banish it from our minds. We should take the children for a walk in the garden?

ANNE
No. Thank you. I need to rest.

Anne lies down stares at the ceiling.

ANNE (CONT'D)
You may go.

Abigail bows, looks at all the torn mail.

140 INT HALLWAY / RED STAIRS DAY 140

Abigail exits into a hallway knowing she slipped up.

ABIGAIL
Fuck!

141 OMITTED 141

142 INT SARAH'S (NOW ABIGAIL'S)QUARTERS DAY 142

Morning. Abigail sits drinking tea. Sally enters she carries a tray of mail. She puts it before her.

SALLY
I need to put it back.

Abigail ignores her. It is all addressed to the Queen. She leafs through her mail. See's Sarah's wax seal on a letter. Takes it.

ABIGAIL
Be gone.

Sally takes the rest of the mail and goes. Abigail opens the letter. She reads it.

Is strangely touched. Wipes a tear away.

She tosses it in a nearby fire.

143 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 143

Anne frenetically goes through her mail on the bed. Tosses letters away. Abigail watches. Anne summons a Footman (4), he leans toward her.

ANNE
This cannot be all of it!

FOOTMAN
It is M'aam.

She snaps.

ANNE
Don't lean at me!

ABIGAIL
Shall we request another fabric piece from your cousin in Florence? Maybe it was lost or eaten by mice on the long journey.

ANNE
No. Just. I would like to know all my mail is here.

ABIGAIL
Of course. Footman go and check again. Immediately! Incompetent!

He scurries away. Anne settles back.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
They are waiting.

144 OMITTED 144

145 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 145

Anne is propped up in a chair. She holds her stomach, grimaces, a tray of hot chocolate and cake half eaten beside her. Anne is breathing in a labored fashion. The men swim in and out of focus. They are in the middle of a cabinet meeting. Harley, Godolphin and a small group of politicians are arguing.

HARLEY
Marlborough is at Southampton. We need a decision.

GODOLPHIN
Your Majesty if I-

ANNE
There was very little mail today.

Godolphin takes this in. Harley not sure what is going on.

HARLEY
Quite. If I may, the situation with Marlborough.

ANNE
He is stealing from me!

GODOLPHIN
What? Your Majesty that is preposterous.

ANNE
Lady Abigail. The privy purse. Is it not true they have stolen from me? Damaged us?

Abigail is stunned. She nods slowly.

ANNE (CONT'D)
It is all there in black and white. She must be ruined and banished from their beloved England. They are not loyal! They would hurt us, our country, the Queen!

GODOLPHIN
Your Majesty if I may-

ANNE
You may not. He will be charged. They will be banished! I have spoken. Get out!

146 INT SARAH'S SOUTHAMPTON HOUSE DAY 146

Sarah is drinking tea with Marlborough. She checks out the window, anxiously.

A group of armed riders approach the house, a BAILIFF at the head of them. She takes this in for a shocked moment.

SARAH
The mail is here.

He looks up at her. She smiles.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I am suddenly so tired of England my darling. Perhaps we should go somewhere else.

147 INT ANNE'S APARTMENTS DAY 147

Anne lies in bed, she opens her eyes. Sees Abigail sitting in a chair, reading by the window, dropping a madeleine into her mouth.

A rabbit wanders near her foot, she lifts a foot and traps the rabbit under her foot. It struggles for a moment. She lets it go with a smile.

Anne slides herself out of the bed. Lands on the floor, in pain. Abigail hears a grunt. Sees Anne is on the floor crawling, in pain.

ABIGAIL
Anne.

Abigail rushes to her, takes her under the arms to help her up.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Darling Anne. Let's get you in a chair.

ANNE
How dare you touch the Queen like that.

Anne leans on the wall.

ABIGAIL
I'm sorry. I-

ANNE
I did not ask you to speak.

ANNE (CONT'D)
My leg. Rub it.

ABIGAIL
You should lie down.

ANNE
You will speak when asked to.

Abigail gets it, drops to her knees starts rubbing.

ANNE (CONT'D)
I am so dizzy...I need to hang on to...

She grabs at Abigail's hair, wraps a hunk around her fingers, holding it hard. Abigail winces.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Something...

Abigail rubs, looks over at the cage full of rabbits across the room sitting staring at her.

Anne winces in pain stares at the wall. Closes her eyes.

THE END